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TALK

# French Grammar

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE FOR LEARNING FRENCH

Concise, clear and easy to follow

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# introduction

**Talk French Grammar** is the essential handbook for anyone setting out to learn French, at home or in a class. With its straightforward approach and clear layout, it promotes a real understanding of how French works and how it relates to English.

It's much more than an ordinary grammar book. Using the tried-and-tested principles of the bestselling **Talk French** and **Talk French 2**, it de-mystifies grammar and guides you through the key structures of French in a way that's really easy to follow even if you have no experience at all of grammar and its terminology.

Its parallel focus is on building a large vocabulary – fast – for you to combine with an understanding of grammar to say whatever you want in French, without having to rely on phrasebooks.

Among its special features you'll find:

- a summary of **the most significant differences** in the way French and English work
- clear, **jargon-free explanations** of French grammar, set out in units and illustrated by hundreds of **practical examples**
- **Word power** pages, tailored to individual units. Some of these focus on the fact that large numbers of French and English words are very similar. **False friends** are highlighted too: words which look as though they might mean one thing but in fact mean something different.
- **learning tips and strategies**, positioned just where you need them
- **dictionary guidance**, with abbreviations and sample entries
- regular **Checkpoints** with practice activities to reinforce the language patterns and help you remember them. These are also useful as revision or to jog your memory.
- **verb tables**: the patterns for widely used regular and irregular verbs
- a **glossary of grammar terms** with examples in English to make them crystal-clear
- a **comprehensive, easy-to-use index**

**Talk French Grammar** can be used successfully alongside any learning materials, and is also the perfect companion for both levels of **Talk French**. The **Talk** series has online activities at www.bbc.co.uk/languages/french, and if you'd like to practise your grammar online, try out the grammar section of the **Steps** course at the same address.

## How to use Talk French Grammar

This book works on several levels – make it work for you!

**New to language learning or forgotten everything you've learnt? Or perhaps you already know some French words but have no structure to use them in?**

Go to **Getting started** on page 8, which gives you an overview of what grammar is about, introduces you to the keystones of grammar and offers a few short activities to help you recognise and remember them.

**New to French but understand the meaning of basic terms such as noun, adjective, verb?**

Go to page 10, which prepares you for learning French by highlighting the principal differences between French and English.

**Learning French on your own or in a class and need extra support?**

Choose the unit you want, work through it then complete the **Checkpoint** at the end to see how much you've understood and remembered. You can select the units in the order that suits you because they're free-standing and they cross-reference to each other so that you can easily check things out if you need to.

**Need a clear and comprehensive French grammar reference book?**

The index will show you where everything is. It uses key words in English and French as well as grammar terms, making it easy for you to find what you're looking for quickly.

**Want to brush up on your French or do some revision?**

The first page of each unit summarises the key points. Reading these and trying your hand at the **Checkpoint** activities will pinpoint any gaps in your knowledge so that you know what might be useful to spend some time on.

**Just want to generally improve your French, deepen your understanding and boost your vocabulary?**

Dip into the book at random, reminding yourself of the structures, reading the examples, checking out the **Word power** pages and using the **Checkpoints**.

# getting started

## What is grammar?

When we talk we do more than just say words randomly; we use them in a specific order and they relate to one another. Grammar is the explanation of how that works: it provides definitions of the structures of a language and how they're used.

## Can't I communicate without learning grammar?

Yes – if you're happy restricting yourself to phrases from a book or pidgin-type communication. You'll just about be able to make yourself understood but conversation will be a strain and communication hit-and-miss. With relatively little knowledge of grammar, you can produce correct and unambiguous French instead. You'll sound more articulate and it will be a much more constructive and satisfying experience.

## How do babies cope without knowing about grammar?

It's true that children learn to talk without ever having heard of a verb or a noun. But if you listen to a toddler you'll often hear words like *hided*, *eated*, *sheeps* or *mans*, showing that the child has in fact absorbed the regular patterns of English and is applying them quite unconsciously – albeit not always correctly. As time goes on, irregularities get ironed out and the child, with no apparent effort, starts saying *hid* and *ate*, *sheep* and *men*.

It takes many months of constant exposure to a language to learn in this way. By the time the average child is starting to form sentences, they will have been hearing their mother tongue for around 4,500 hours over a period of 18 months or so.

Most adults want results more quickly than that. By consciously learning how French is structured and how new words fit within sentences, you shortcut the process considerably. But you'll still experiment and make mistakes, just as children do, because that's part of the learning curve too.

## How much grammar will I need?

At the start, you can get by comfortably with the basics. As you carry on with your French, you'll gradually accumulate knowledge, and more pieces of the jigsaw will slot into place. There are some aspects of grammar that you might never need or want to know about – as with most things, there's a level that's largely of interest only to the professional or the enthusiast.

## Where do I start?

It pays to become familiar with some of the terms used to describe how a language works because it allows you to make sense of statements that you might come across in course books, such as:
*The adjective usually goes after the noun* or *The definite article is not used when …*

Focus first on the six main building blocks of a sentence. Read these descriptions, then see if you can pick them out in sentences.

- **Nouns** are the words for living beings, things, places and abstract concepts: *woman*, *son*, *doctor*, *Oliver*, *dog*, *table*, *house*, *Scotland*, *time*, *joy*, *freedom*.
- **Pronouns** are words used to avoid repeating a noun: *I*, *me*, *we*, *us*, *you*, *he/she*, *him/her*, *it*, *they*, *them*.
- **Articles** are *the*, *a/an* and *some*.
- **Adjectives** are words that describe nouns and pronouns: ***good*** *wine;* ***strong red*** *wine;* ***my*** *wine; I am* ***tired****; it was* ***superb****.*
- **Adverbs** add information to adjectives, verbs and other adverbs: ***very*** *good wine; you speak* ***clearly****; you speak* ***really*** *clearly.*
- **Verbs** are words like *go*, *sleep*, *eat*, *like*, *have*, *be*, *live*, *die*, that relate to doing and being.

1 Have a look at the underlined words and write N by the nouns, V by the verbs and ADJ by the adjectives.
   a) Sofia works for a glossy magazine. She organises interviews, hires professional models and photographers and travels all over the world. Her boyfriend is a well-known actor.
   b) My father comes from Toulouse although he lives in Paris because he works at the central office of a large company.
   c) They prepared a fantastic meal for us. We ate grilled fish, fresh asparagus and new potatoes, drank a superb French red wine – and the dessert was absolutely incredible.

2 Now pick out the adverbs ADV and the adjectives ADJ.
   a) The house was very reasonable but it was rather dilapidated … and the garden was really small and overgrown.
   b) We played superbly. It wasn't our fault that the pitch was terribly uneven and the ref deliberately unfair.

## How different are French and English?

On the whole, French grammar is very similar to English, but there are a few aspects which are rather different. If you're prepared for these, you'll find that you get used to them very quickly.

### Gender: masculine and feminine

Every single French noun – not just the words for people and animals – is either masculine (m) or feminine (f). There's no sense of *it*, not even for things like cars, furniture, sport or days of the week – everything is *he* or *she*. Words linked to a noun, such as articles and adjectives, also have to be masculine or feminine.

### Articles

There are four versions of *the* in French. The one you use depends on whether the following noun is masculine or feminine, singular or plural, and whether it begins with a vowel or a consonant. And there are two words for *a/an*.

### Different versions of *you*

In English there's only one word for *you*; in French there are two, depending on who you're talking to. **Tu** conveys familiarity and friendliness when you're talking to one person. When there's more than one person or when you're talking to one person you don't know very well or who is older than you, you use **vous**.

### Verb endings; I, we, you, he/she, they

In English a verb generally stays pretty much the same no matter who's carrying it out: *I eat, we eat, you eat, the cats eat, Joe eats.*
In French, as well as using *I, you, she,* etc. you change the ending of the verb to show who's doing what.

### Verbs: tenses

English has more tenses than French, which means that one French tense may correspond to two or more English tenses. For instance, **je vais** can mean both *I go* and *I am going*; **j'ai fait** *I did* or *I have done*.

### Negatives

There are two words that make up the negative in French: **ne ... pas** *not*, **ne ... rien** *nothing*, **ne ... jamais** *never*, and so on. These words go round the verb.

### Word order

On the whole, word order is similar to English. The most noticeable differences are with adjectives, which usually come after nouns, not before them as in English: **la musique classique** *classical music*.
Also, words like *it* and *them* usually come before a verb not after it.

### What about vocabulary?

Learning a new language is a several-pronged process. Knowledge of grammar has a key place, with even a few simple structures going a long way towards making sure you're understood. Knowing how to use verbs and when to include words like **mais** *but*, **parce que** *because* or **autrement** *otherwise* take you a big step further, letting you express more complex thoughts.

But all these are of limited use without a good stock of words to slot into the structures – and the most obvious source of these is a dictionary.

### What sort of dictionary is best?

When choosing your first English/French dictionary, go for a medium-sized one. Too small and it won't give you enough information; too big and it will confuse you with too much. There are also dictionaries online, many of them free.

### Why are dictionaries so full of abbreviations?

Some words are straightforward, with just one meaning: **préférer** *prefer* can only be a verb, **possible** *possible* an adjective.

Others are more complex, with the same word belonging in more than one grammatical category. *Mind* can mean what you think with (noun) and to look after (verb). *Book* can mean something you read (noun) and it can mean to reserve a place (verb). *Calm* can mean peaceful (adjective), peace (noun) and to soothe (verb).

To make sure you find the right category of word, each has an abbreviation next to it. The most common are:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *art* article | *adj* adjective | *adv* adverb |
| *f* feminine | *m* masculine | *n* noun |
| *pl* plural | *prep* preposition | *pron* pronoun |
| *sing* singular | *v* verb | |

You may find slight variations in some dictionaries so it's worth checking with the introduction.

### How do I make sure I choose the right translation?

Some words have more than one meaning even within the same grammatical category: the adjective *hard* can mean *solid* and it can mean *difficult*. The noun *habit* can be something a nun wears or it can be something you do on a regular basis. The verb *to press* can mean to iron clothes or to push down on something.

There's often an explanation or a phrase to guide you, but if you've looked up an English word and are still not sure which of the French translations to use, look them all up and see what English translations are given.

**hard** *adj* **1.** dur: ~ *surface* surface *f* dure **2.** difficile: ~ *work* travail *m* difficile **3.** sévère, dur: ~ *master* maître *m* sévère **4.** rude, rigoureux: ~ *winter* hiver *m* rude **5.** ~ *shoulder* bande *f* d'arrêt d'urgence; *the* ~ *stuff* alcool *m; to learn the* ~ *way* apprendre à ses dépens

**habit** *n* **1.** habitude *f*, coutume *f*: *out of* ~ par habitude; *to get into bad* ~*s* prendre de mauvaises habitudes **2.** accoutumance *f*: ~*-forming* qui crée une accoutumance **3.** [*relig*] habit *m*

**press** *v* **1.** appuyer (sur): *to* ~ *the key/button* appuyer sur la touche/le bouton **2.** presser: *to* ~ *oranges* presser des oranges **3.** serrer: *to* ~ *s.o's hand* serrer la main de qn **4.** repasser: *to* ~ *a shirt* repasser une chemise **5.** *to* ~ *on* continuer **6.** insister, faire pression sur (une personne), presser: *to* ~ *s.o. to do sthg* presser qn de faire qch

### What if I can't find the word I'm looking for?

This is where your knowledge of grammar comes in. The two main points to remember are that:

- adjectives in a dictionary are in the masculine singular
- verbs are in the infinitive, so you have to replace any other endings with **-er**, **-ir**, or **-re** before you look up a verb. If you still have a problem, it probably means that you've come across part of an irregular verb, the most common of which are written out in full on pages 204-253.

### How else can I build up a wide vocabulary?

The most obvious source of French outside France is the internet, where you can find information in French on practically anything. Use a dictionary to find the key words relating to your interests then just browse. You'll be surprised at how much French you absorb when words are in a familiar context that interests you.

Don't forget that you already have a huge latent vocabulary simply because, for historical reasons, French and English have a lot of words in common. Some word groups are all but identical, others have moved apart slightly. These are the main focus of the **Word power** pages, which show you how to 'convert' from one language to the other. Not only will you find your vocabulary increasing dramatically, but you'll also have the knowledge and the confidence to make an educated guess at the meaning of new words.

### Is it true that many English words are used in French?

Over the years French and English have borrowed and absorbed many words from each other. Most of them have stayed unchanged but a few have adapted to their adopted language. For example, **boulingrin**, which is a manicured garden or lawn, is from the English *bowling green*, **bifteck** *steak* is from *beef steak* and **footing** means *jogging*.

Similarly, the rules of English grammar are often applied to French imported words: we add an English past participle ending *-ed* to the French **cliché** and **sauté**, for instance, to get *clichéd* and *sautéed*.

### Do these shared words sound the same?

Many of them are recognisable for speakers of the other language – but many more are pronounced with a 'local' accent, whether French or English. Some French words routinely used in the UK are not said as a French person would say them – **cul-de-sac**, **lieu** and **bureau de change**, for instance.

The key to good pronunciation is to assume that even words you recognise might sound different in French, and to approach **Sounds and spelling** on page 15 with a completely open mind.

Here are just a few of the French words and expressions used in English:

*aide-de-camp*
*attaché*
*au pair*
*chargé d'affaires*
*chauffeur*
*employee*
*entrepreneur*

*arabesque*
*artiste*
*ballet*
*chanteuse*
*cor anglais*
*corps de ballet*
*pas de deux*

*à la mode*
*chic*
*coiffeur*
*couture*
*lingerie*
*négligée*

*avant-garde*
*bric-à-brac*
*pied-à-terre*
*savoir-faire*
*tête-à-tête*
*vis-à-vis*

*bon vivant*
*carte blanche*
*déjà vu*
*laissez faire*
*pièce de résistance*
*rendezvous*

*à la carte*
*apéritif*
*au gratin*
*courgette*
*haute cuisine*
*hors d'oeuvre*

... and some English words regularly used in French:

**club**
**golf**
**hockey**
**sport**
**squash**
**tennis**

**baby-sitter**
**camping**
**hot dog**
**parking**
**shopping**
**weekend**

**chat room**
**internet**
**mail**
**networking**
**spamming**
**web-cam**

**e-commerce**
**leader**
**manager**
**marketing**
**sponsoring**
**start-up**

# Sounds and spelling

The pronunciation and spelling of French can seem a bit daunting at first:

- The sound of some letters is unexpected, for example, **oi** sounds like wa: **moi**.

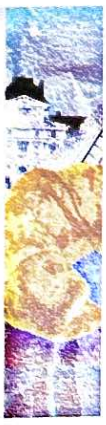
- There are sounds in French that don't exist in English, such as **r**, which is a guttural sound pronounced in the throat, and nasal vowels, where the air is expelled through the nose as well as the mouth.

- Some letters are silent: **h** is always silent, while other consonants are silent only when they appear at the end of words.

- One sound can have several different spellings: **parler**, **parlez**, **parlé**, **parlais**, **parlait** and **parlaient** are all pronounced more or less the same.

Don't be put off by these features; there are consistent rules governing French pronunciation, and a knowledge of these rules, plus frequent and regular practice, will soon have you speaking French with confidence.

However good your knowledge of grammar is, however wide your vocabulary, you won't learn to speak French just by reading and writing. You need to listen too – so take every opportunity to listen to native French speakers. Even if at first you don't understand a great deal of what they're saying, you can focus on how French sounds and watch people's faces as they speak.



# pronunciation

## vowel sounds

French has many different vowel sounds, including some that don't exist in English. The sound of a vowel can change when it has an accent or when it's combined with another vowel.

These are the basic guidelines:

| | |
|---|---|
| **a** | like *a* in *bad*: **Paris**<br>an accent makes no difference: **voilà** |
| **e** | without an accent **e** sounds like *er* in *mother*: **je**, **le**<br>unless it's followed by two consonants, when it sounds like *e* in *bed*: **merci**, **cette** |
| **è, ê** | like *e* in *bed*: **crème**, **être**, **fête** |
| **é** | like *ay* in *day* but stopping short of pronouncing the *y*: **café**, |
| **i** | like *ea* in *peace*: **ici**, **Nice** |
| **o** | like *o* in *hot*: **homme**<br>unless it's at the end of a word or has a circumflex (^), when it sounds like *over*: **vélo**, **hôtel** |
| **u** | this sound doesn't exist in English. Position your lips to say *oo* but say *ee* instead without moving your lips: **tu**, **vue** |
| **ai** | like *ay* in *day* but stopping short of pronouncing the *y*: **maison** |
| **ei** | like *e* in *bed*: **treize** |
| **eu** | like *i* in *girl*: **peux** |
| **ou** | like *oo* in *ooze*: **vous** |
| **oi** | like *wa* in *wag*: **moi** |
| **au/eau** | like *o* in *over*: **château** |
| **ui** | like *we*: **cuisine** |

**y** is usually a vowel in French, sounding like *y* in *happy*: **Yves**, **lycée**.
But when it's at the beginning of words like **yoga** and **yeux**, it's a consonant and it's pronounced like *y* in *yellow*.

Some vowels are nasal, as in words like **temps** *time*, **change**, **vin** *wine*, **pain** *bread*, **faim** *hunger*, **point** *full stop*. To produce a nasal vowel, say the English word *sang* or *song* but stop short before the *ng*. You'll notice that your tongue doesn't touch the roof of your mouth and that you can feel the build-up of air in your nostrils.

Nasal vowels occur before **m** and **n** unless:

- there's another vowel following the **m** or **n** as in **cinéma**
- the **m** or **n** is doubled as in **pomme** *apple* and **Cannes**

## consonants

Most consonants sound very similar in French and English. The only ones to look out for are **c**, **g**, **h**, **j**, **q** and **r**, plus the combinations **ll** and **th**.

| | |
|---|---|
| **c** | like *c* in *cat* before **a**, **o**, **u**: **carte**, **coton** |
| | like *s* in *sat* before **e**, **i**, **y**: **glace**, **Nancy** |
| **ç** | like *s* in *sat*: **français** |
| **ch** | like *sh* in *shop*: **château** |
| **g** | like *g* in *golf* before **a**, **o**, **u**: **garçon**, **baguette** |
| | like *s* in *leisure* before **e**, **i**, **y**: **général** |
| **gn** | like *ny* in *canyon*: **champagne**, **montagne** |
| **h** | always silent: **hôtel** |
| **j** | like *s* in *leisure*: **je**, **jardin** |
| **ll** | sometimes the same as English: **village** |
| | sometimes like *y* in *day*: **fille**, **bouteille**, **Marseille** |
| **qu** | like *c* in *cat*: **quatre**, **quiche** |
| **r** | rolled at the back of the throat: **rouge** |
| **th** | like *t* in *tea*: **théâtre** |

## liaison

Usually the final consonant of a word isn't pronounced: **ballet**, **petits fours**, **grand prix**, **froid**, **restaurant**. But when the following word begins with a vowel, you do pronounce that final consonant and run the two words together. It's called liaison:

**les_enfants** *the children* – the **s** of **les** is pronounced like **z**
**vous_êtes** *you are* – the **s** of **vous** is pronounced like **z**
**aux_autres** *to the others* – the **x** of **aux** is pronounced like **z**
**elle est_allée** *she went* – the **t** of **est** is pronounced
**en_Angleterre** *in England* – the **n** of **en** is pronounced

Most words beginning with **h** are also liaised:
**deux_heures**, **trois_hommes** – the **x** and **s** sound like **z**.

But a few words beginning with **h** are not liaised. These are mainly (but not all) words of foreign origin like **le hockey** and **le hamster**. The **h** in these words is called an aspirated **h**, and with words beginning with an aspirated **h**, **le** isn't shortened to **l'** and there's no liaison:
**les haricots** is pronounced lay-arrico.

## stress and intonation

English has a tum-ti-tum rhythm, where certain syllables are stressed more than others: *I wandered lonely as a cloud; Our Father, who art in heaven.* French has a rat-a-tat rhythm; in other words, each syllable of a word, and each word in the sentence, is given equal emphasis.

French sentences are made up of rhythmic groups, or groups of related words e.g. **Maman et papa | m'ont visité | hier soir** *Mum and Dad visited me yesterday* and **Mon mari Luc | est cuisinier | à l'Hôtel Montmartre** *My husband Luc is a chef at the Hotel Montmartre*. The last syllable of each rhythmic group, apart from the final one, has a rising intonation, i.e. it is pronounced at a higher pitch. The final syllable of the final rhythmic group has a falling intonation, i.e. it's pronounced at a lower pitch. When asking a question the final syllable of the sentence is also given a rising intonation.

## accents

It's useful to know what the various accents are called in French for spelling out or taking down accented words.

[´] **L'accent aigu** *acute accent* appears only over **é** and changes the sound to *ay*, as in words like **communiqué, exposé, lamé, café, résumé**, which keep the accent in English.

[`] **L'accent grave** *grave accent* can appear over **à, è** and **ù**. There's no difference in pronunciation between **à** and **a** or **ù** and **u**; the accent mainly distinguishes between two words: **la** *the*, **là** *there*; **ou** *or*, **où** *where*.
**e** without an accent sounds like *er* in *father* whereas **è** is longer and stronger, like *e* in *end*: **père** *father*; **bière** *beer*.

[^] **L'accent circonflexe** *circumflex* can appear over **â, ê, î, ô** and **û** and doesn't influence pronunciation. It often indicates that the word was once spelt with an **s**: **forêt** *forest*, or it can distinguish between two words: **mur** *wall*, **mûr** *ripe*.

[¸] **La cedille** *cedilla* only ever appears below **ç** and shows that it's pronounced *s*, not *k*. When followed by **e** or **i**, **c** is always pronounced *s*, so it doesn't need a cedilla.

[¨] **Le tréma** *diaeresis* can appear over **ë** or **ï** to show that the vowel is pronounced separately and distinctly, not combined with the preceding vowel: **Noël, naïf** *naive*.

## the French alphabet

When spelling words out, the letters of the alphabet sound like the English sounds in the middle column. The names in the right-hand column are used when clarification is needed, in the same way as the UK uses: *alpha*, *bravo*, *charlie* ... *x-ray*, *yankee*, *zulu*.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **a** | ah | **Anatole** |
| **b** | bay | **Bérthe** |
| **c** | say | **Célestin** |
| **d** | day | **Désiré** |
| **e** | euh | **Eugène** |
| **f** | eff | **François** |
| **g** | zhay | **Gaston** |
| **h** | ash | **Henri** |
| **i** | ee | **Irma** |
| **j** | zhee | **Joseph** |
| **k** | ka | **Kléber** |
| **l** | el | **Louis** |
| **m** | em | **Marcel** |
| **n** | en | **Nicolas** |
| **o** | oh | **Oscar** |
| **p** | pay | **Pierre** |
| **q** | koo | **Quintal** |
| **r** | ehr | **Raoul** |
| **s** | es | **Suzanne** |
| **t** | tay | **Thérèse** |
| **u** | oo | **Ursule** |
| **v** | vay | **Victor** |
| **w** | doo-bluh-vay | **William** |
| **x** | eeks | **Xavier** |
| **y** | ee-grek | **Yvonne** |
| **z** | zed | **Zoé** |

## spelling things out

When using **Anatole**, **Bérthe** etc. the link word is **comme** *as/like*:
**Inès? Comment ça s'écrit?** *Inès? How do you spell it?*
**i comme Irma, n comme Nicolas, e avec accent grave comme Eugène, s comme Suzanne**

*Double* is **double**. *Emma* would be: euh, **double** em, ah

## punctuation marks

* **astérisque**
@ **arobase** (or **at**)
/ **barre oblique** (or **slash**)
\ **barre oblique inversée** (or **anti-slash**, or **back slash**)
. **point**
- *(hyphen)* **trait d'union**
– *(dash)* **tiret**
_ *(underscore)* **trait de soulignement**
, **virgule**
# **(symbole) dièse**
*ABC upper case* **majuscule**
*abc lower case* **minuscule**
*(in brackets)* **entre parenthèses**
*"in inverted commas"* **entre guillemets**
*space* **espace**

It's useful to know the French for punctuation marks and keyboard symbols if you want to spell out, for example, your **adresse courriel/e-mail** *email address*.

And when spelling out a **site internet/site web** *website* or a **page web** *web page*, you need *www*, which would be doo-bluh vay, doo-bluh vay, doo-bluh vay or **trois** doo-bluh vay.

*www.bbcactive.com* would sound like this:
**trois** doo-bluh vay, **point**, bay bay say ah say tay ee vay euh **point com**
... and if you add /languages:
**barre oblique** el, ah, en, zhay, oo, ah, zhay, euh, es

Have a go at saying it out loud, then try spelling your own name and email address.

## capital letters

French uses **majuscules** *capital letters* less than English. They're used at the beginning of a sentence but they're not used for:

- **je** *I* (unless it starts a sentence)
- names of days or months (see page 30):
  **jeudi** *Thursday*; **mars** *March*
- languages or adjectives of nationality:
  **Il parle anglais.** *He speaks English.*
  **Je suis écossais.** *I'm Scottish.*
  **un pays européen** *a European country*
- geographical words such as *ocean* or *mountain* and also words like *street*:
  **l'océan Atlantique, la rivière Mersey, la mer Méditerranée, le mont Everest, rue Rimbaud, avenue Victor Hugo**
- religions and their adherents:
  **le christianisme, le bouddhisme, l'hindouisme, le catholicisme, le judaïsme** but **l'Islam**
  **les chrétiens, les bouddhistes, les hindous, les catholiques, les juifs** *Jews*, **les musulmans**
- names of organisations of which more than one exist – although a proper name within it ***does*** take a capital:
  **le ministère de la Culture** *Ministry of Culture*; **la bibliothèque Mazarine** *Mazarine Library*
- adjectives as part of the name of an organisation of which there's only one – unless the adjective comes before the noun:
  **l'Académie française** *French Academy*; **l'Assemblée nationale** *National Assembly*; **la Haute Cour de justice** *High Court of Justice*



OC 137212284
BC 26354494

Capital letters *are* used:

- for names of people:
  **Monsieur et Madame Hubert**; **Jean-Marc**
- places:
  towns: **Paris**, **Marseille**, **Lyon**, **Grenoble**, **Lille**, **Nice**

  countries: **l'Allemagne** *Germany*, **l'Angleterre** *England*, **l'Autriche** *Austria*, **la Belgique**, **le Canada**, **le Danemark**, **l'Ecosse** *Scotland*, **l'Espagne** *Spain*, **les Etats-Unis** *United States*, **la Finlande**, **la France**, **la Grande Bretagne** *Great Britain*, **la Grèce**, **la Hongrie** *Hungary*, **l'Irlande**, **la Norvège** *Norway*, **le Pays de Galles** *Wales*, **la Pologne** *Poland*, **le Portugal**, **les Pays-Bas** *Netherlands*, **la Roumanie**, **le Royaume-Uni** *United Kingdom*, **la Russie**, **la Slovaquie**, **la Suède** *Sweden*, **la Suisse** *Switzerland*, **l'Ukraine**

  although the adjective is lower case in countries whose name consists of unhyphenated noun + adjective(s): **la République tchèque** *Czech Republic*, **la République dominicaine** *Dominican Republic*, **l'Arabie saoudite** *Saudi Arabia*, **les Emirats arabes unis** *United Arab Emirates*

  continents: **l'Afrique**, **l'Amérique du Nord/Sud**, **l'Asie**, **l'Antarctique**, **l'Australie**, **l'Europe**

- nationalities when used as nouns:
  **Les Français aiment leur langue.** *The French love their language.*
  **Les Anglais aiment faire la queue.** *The English like standing in queues.*

Accents can be missed off capital letters, but it's not wrong to include them, particularly if the accent affects the sound of the letter. A cedilla is never missed off a capital **C**:
**les États-Unis** or **les Etats-Unis** *United States*; **Ça, c'est fait**. *That's done.*

# word power

There's a pattern to the way some consonants in letter combinations in English and French correspond. These are only broad guidelines and there are plenty of exceptions.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *c* | **que** | *Arctic* **Arctique**, *classic* **classique**, *ethnic* **ethnique**, *logic* **logique**, *music* **musique** |
| *dv* | **v** | *advance* **avance**, *advantage* **avantage**, *Advent* **Avent**, *adventure* **aventure**, *advocate* **avocat** |
| *ni* | **gn** | *companion* **compagnon**, *onion* **oignon**, *pinion* **pignon** |
| *ory* | **oire** | *glory* **gloire**, *history* **histoire**, *ivory* **ivoire**, *memory* **mémoire**, *victory* **victoire** |
| *ous* | **eux** | *amorous* **amoureux**, *copious* **copieux**, *joyous* **joyeux**, *nervous* **nerveux** |
| words beginning with *s* | **é** | *spell* **épeler**, *stallion* **étalon**, *star* **étoile**, *state* **état**, *study* **étudier** |
| *v* | **f** | *active* **actif**, *evasive* **évasif**, *expansive* **expansif**, *naive* **naïf**, *positive* **positif** |

# checkpoint 1

1 In which of these phrases would you hear the **s** of **les**?
**les rues, les oignons, les hindous, les soirs, les chaussures, les wagons, les haricots, les Européens**

2 In which of these words is **c** pronounced like *k*?
**citron, leçon, glace, comme, société**

3 When spelling words out, what names are used for the letters **f, l, n** and **t**?

4 How is *www* pronounced?

5 How can you say @ in an email address, apart from using the English *at*?

6 **l'adresse de l'académie française est 23, quai de conti, 75006 paris.** Which of the words in this sentence need a capital letter?

7 What happens to the pitch of your voice at the end of a question?

8 What's the sixth vowel in French?

9 Pick out the word that doesn't rhyme: **pavé, avais, laver, ravi, savez**

10 Without looking at page 22, name four western European countries in French.

Once you're comfortable with spelling out your own details, have a go at spelling out the names and email addresses of friends and family.

# Numbers, time and date

Some aspects of French and English numbers are very different. For example, in French:

- a comma is used where English uses a full stop, and vice versa, so *24,000* would be **24.000** in French and *7.5* would be **7,5**
- *one* has a masculine and a feminine version: **un** and **une**
- 17, 18 and 19 have a different pattern from 11–16
- 71–99 are based on a counting system that's different from 21–69. 70–79 translate literally as *sixty-ten*, *sixty-eleven*, etc; 80 translates literally as *four-twenties* and 81–99 use 80 followed by 1–19.
- French phone numbers are read out in pairs, not single digits: 93 44 50 08 is said as **quatre-vingt-treize, quarante-quatre, cinquante, zéro huit**.

There are also some interesting differences where time and date are concerned:

- In writing, time using the 24–hour clock (which is widespread in France) includes **h**, short for **heures** *hours* but has no full stop:
  **22h15, vingt-deux heures quinze** *22.15*
  **le train de 13h40** *the 13.40 train* lit. *the train of 13.40*
- The French for a *week* is **huit jours** *eight days*, and a *fortnight* is **quinze jours** *15 days* or **une quinzaine**.

*Zero* is **zéro** in French. The noun that follows it is in the singular: **zéro faute** *no mistakes*. If you look it up in a dictionary, you'll find it has the following English translations:

**zéro** (m) **1.** nought, zero: *au-dessous de* ~ below zero; *au-dessus de* ~ above zero; ~ *heure* zero hour, midnight; *partir de* ~ start from scratch
**2.** *[sport]* nil: *trois (buts)* à ~ 3–0 **3.** *[tennis]* love: *quinze* à ~ 15-love.
**4.** *[telephone]* 0.

# cardinal numbers

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **un** | 11 | **onze** |
| 2 | **deux** | 12 | **douze** |
| 3 | **trois** | 13 | **treize** |
| 4 | **quatre** | 14 | **quatorze** |
| 5 | **cinq** | 15 | **quinze** |
| 6 | **six** | 16 | **seize** |
| 7 | **sept** | 17 | **dix-sept** |
| 8 | **huit** | 18 | **dix-huit** |
| 9 | **neuf** | 19 | **dix-neuf** |
| 10 | **dix** | | |

- **Un** changes to agree with the gender (masculine or feminine) of its noun, like *a/an* (see page 44): **un parc**, **une maison**
- Numbers are masculine and take the definite article **le** (page 46). **Le** doesn't shorten to **l'** before **huit** or **onze**: **le onze novembre**.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 20 | **vingt** | 27 | **vingt-sept** |
| 21 | **vingt et un** | 28 | **vingt-huit** |
| 22 | **vingt-deux** | 29 | **vingt-neuf** |
| 23 | **vingt-trois** | 30 | **trente** |
| 24 | **vingt-quatre** | 40 | **quarante** |
| 25 | **vingt-cinq** | 50 | **cinquante** |
| 26 | **vingt-six** | 60 | **soixante** |

- The numbers 31–69 repeat the pattern 21–29: **quarante-huit** *48*, **soixante-cinq** *65*
- **un** changes to **une** in numbers followed by a feminine noun: **trente et une filles** *31 girls*; **soixante et une pièces** *61 rooms*
- 70 is literally *sixty-ten*, and 71–79 are counted as *sixty-eleven*, *sixty-twelve* … *sixty-nineteen*:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 70 | **soixante-dix** | 75 | **soixante-quinze** |
| 71 | **soixante et onze** | 76 | **soixante-seize** |
| 72 | **soixante-douze** | 77 | **soixante-dix-sept** |
| 73 | **soixante-treize** | 78 | **soixante-dix-huit** |
| 74 | **soixante-quatorze** | 79 | **soixante-dix-neuf** |

- 80 is literally *four-twenties*. This combines with 1–19 for the numbers 80–99:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 80 | **quatre-vingts** | 90 | **quatre-vingt-dix** |
| 81 | **quatre-vingt-un** | 91 | **quatre-vingt-onze** |
| 82 | **quatre-vingt-deux** | 92 | **quatre-vingt-douze** |
| 83 | **quatre-vingt-trois** | 93 | **quatre-vingt-treize** |
| 84 | **quatre-vingt-quatre** | 94 | **quatre-vingt-quatorze** |
| 85 | **quatre-vingt-cinq** | 95 | **quatre-vingt-quinze** |
| 86 | **quatre-vingt-six** | 96 | **quatre-vingt-seize** |
| 87 | **quatre-vingt-sept** | 97 | **quatre-vingt-dix-sept** |
| 88 | **quatre-vingt-huit** | 98 | **quatre-vingt-dix-huit** |
| 89 | **quatre-vingt-neuf** | 99 | **quatre-vingt-dix-neuf** |

- 80 is the only number to have an **s** on **vingts**.
- 81 and 91 don't include **et** before **un**, as smaller numbers do.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 100 | **cent** | 1000 | **mille** |
| 101 | **cent un** | 1100 | **mille cent** |
| 102 | **cent deux** | 1500 | **mille cinq cents** |
| 110 | **cent dix** | 2000 | **deux mille** |
| 150 | **cent cinquante** | 10 000 | **dix mille** |
| 175 | **cent soixante-quinze** | 100 000 | **cent mille** |
| 200 | **deux cents** | 500 000 | **cinq cent mille** |
| 201 | **deux cent un** | 1 000 000 | **un million** |
| 220 | **deux cent vingt** | 2 000 000 | **deux millions** |
| 500 | **cinq cents** | 1 000 000 000 | **un milliard** |

In the plural:

- **cent** *a hundred* adds an **s** only in round hundreds:
  300 **trois cents**, but 310 **trois cent dix**; 700 **sept cents**, but 701 **sept cent un**
- **mille** *a thousand* doesn't change:
  2 000 **deux mille**, 5 500 **cinq mille cinq cents**
- **un million** *a million* and **un milliard** *a billion* have the regular plurals **millions** and **milliards**. They're followed by **de** when used before a noun:
  **un million d'euros** *1,000,000 euros*
  **sept milliards de dollars** *7,000,000,000 dollars*
  ... but **un million cinq cent mille euros** *1,500,000 euros*

## ordinal numbers

Ordinal numbers are formed by adding **-ième** to the cardinal number minus its final vowel:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1st | **premier/première** | **1er** (m), **1re** (f) |
| 2nd | **deuxième/second(e)** | **2e** |
| 3rd | **troisième** | **3e** |
| 4th | **quatrième** | **4e** |
| 5th | **cinquième** | **5e** |
| 6th | **sixième** | **6e** |
| 7th | **septième** | **7e** |
| 8th | **huitième** | **8e** |
| 9th | **neuvième** | **9e** |
| 10th | **dixième** | **10e** |

- The **er** of **premier** changes to **re** for **première**.
- **Cinquième** adds **u** before **ième**.
- The **f** in **neuf** becomes **v** in **neuvième**.
- *First* in 21, 31, 41, etc. is **unième**: **vingt et unième** *21st*, **cent unième** *101st*.

Ordinal numbers are used much as in English except that:

- they agree in gender (masculine or feminine) and number (singular or plural) with their noun – although only **premier** and **second** have separate feminine forms:
  **première (1re) classe** *first class*
  **les premiers jours** *the first days*
  **la Seconde Guerre mondiale** *the Second World War*
  **les troisièmes rencontres** *the third meetings*
- they're not used for dates, with the exception of **premier** (page 30).

**Premier** is also the odd one out when talking about sovereigns and popes. From *second* onwards, cardinal numbers are used:
**Charles premier** *Charles I*
**Elizabeth deux** *Elizabeth II*
**Napoléon trois** *Napoleon III*
**Louis quatorze** *Louis XIV*
**le Pape Benoît seize** *Pope Benedict XVI*

**umpteenth** *adj* énième: *for the ~ time* pour la énième fois

## time

- When telling the time in English you generally begin with the minutes: *five (minutes) past nine*. It's the opposite in French: first the hour, then the minutes.
- There's no word for *past*; *to* is **moins** for minutes to the hour.
- **Quart** *quarter* is accompanied by **le** when used for *quarter to* the hour, but not for *quarter past*.

**Quelle heure est-il? Il est quelle heure?** *What time is it?*
**Il est ...** *It's ...*
*midday/midnight* **midi/minuit**
*01.00* **une heure**
*02.00* **deux heures**
*09.05* **neuf heures cinq**
*09.10* **neuf heures dix**
*09.15* **neuf heures quinze** or **neuf heures et quart**
*09.20* **neuf heures vingt**
*09.25* **neuf heures vingt-cinq**
*09.30* **neuf heures trente** or **neuf heures et demie**
*09.35* **neuf heures trente-cinq** or **dix heures moins vingt-cinq**
*09.40* **neuf heures quarante** or **dix heures moins vingt**
*09.45* **neuf heures quarante-cinq** or **dix heures moins le quart**
*09.50* **neuf heures cinquante** or **dix heures moins dix**
*09.55* **neuf heures cinquante-cinq** or **dix heures moins cinq**

**A quelle heure ...?** *(At) what time ...?*
**à une heure** *at one o'clock*
**à deux heures, à trois heures, à onze heures** *at two o'clock, three o'clock, 11 o'clock*

*Half past* is **et demie** (f) except with midday and midnight, when it's **et demi** (m):
**à huit heures et demie** *at half past eight*
**à midi/minuit et demi** *at half past 12*

The use of the 24-hour clock is widespread in France:
**à vingt-trois heures quinze** *at 23.15* (**23h15** in French)
**de neuf heures à dix-huit heures** *from 09.00 to 18.00*
**le train de 13h40** *the 13.40 train* lit. *the train of 13.40*

## date: days, months, years

Days, months and seasons are all masculine and they're written without a capital letter in French.

- **Les jours de la semaine sont** *The days of the week are:*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **lundi** | *Monday* | **vendredi** | *Friday* |
| **mardi** | *Tuesday* | **samedi** | *Saturday* |
| **mercredi** | *Wednesday* | **dimanche** | *Sunday* |
| **jeudi** | *Thursday* | | |

There's no word for *on* in French with days, but you use **le** when you want to convey that something is a regular event:
**Je travaille lundi.** *I'm working on Monday.*
**Je travaille le lundi.** *I work on Mondays/every Monday.*

- **Les mois de l'année sont** *The months of the year are:*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **janvier** | *January* | **juillet** | *July* |
| **février** | *February* | **août** | *August* |
| **mars** | *March* | **septembre** | *September* |
| **avril** | *April* | **octobre** | *October* |
| **mai** | *May* | **novembre** | *November* |
| **juin** | *June* | **décembre** | *December* |

**Je vais à Strasbourg en août.** *I'm going to Strasbourg in August.*

- **Les quatre saisons sont** *The four seasons are:*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **le printemps** | *spring* | **au printemps** | *in spring* |
| **l'été** | *summer* | **en été** | *in summer* |
| **l'automne** | *autumn* | **en automne** | *in autumn* |
| **l'hiver** | *winter* | **en hiver** | *in winter* |

- There are various ways of saying the years 18.., 19.. etc., including using **mil**, a special form of **mille**:
**Je suis né(e)** *I was born*
... **en mille/mil neuf cent soixante-quinze** ... *in 1975*
... **en dix-neuf cent soixante-quinze** ... *in 1975*
... **en soixante-quinze** ... *in '75*

- With the date, ordinal numbers are used only for the first of the month; cardinal numbers are used after that. *On* isn't translated.
**le premier mai** *(on) 1 May*, **le quatorze juillet** *(on) 14 July*
**le huit juin** *(on) 8 June*, **le onze mai** *(on) 11 May* (NB **le** not **l'**)

# word power

**quand?** *when?*
**à trois heures pile** *at three o'clock on the dot*
**vers six heures** *about six o'clock*
**jusqu'à une heure** *until one o'clock*
**avant sept heures** *before seven o'clock*
**après trois heures** *after three o'clock* (c.f. **trois heures plus tard** *after three hours*)
**dans cinq minutes** *in five minutes' time*

**aujourd'hui** *today*
**à dix heures du matin/du soir** *at ten o'clock in the morning/evening*
**à trois heures de l'après-midi** *at three o'clock in the afternoon*
**ce matin** *this morning*; **ce soir** *this evening*
**cet après-midi** *this afternoon*
**tous les jours/mois** *every day/month*
**tous les deux jours** *every two days, every other day*
**toutes les semaines** *every week*
**une fois par semaine/mois** *once a week/month*

**demain** *tomorrow*
**demain matin/soir** *tomorrow morning/evening*
**après-demain** *the day after tomorrow*
**en deux jours/en moins de deux jours** *within two days*
**la semaine/l'année prochaine** *next week/year*
**lundi prochain** *next Monday*; **le lendemain** *the following day*

**hier** *yesterday*
**hier matin/soir** *yesterday morning/evening*
**avant-hier** *the day before yesterday*
**l'autre jour** *the other day*
**il y a deux jours/une semaine** *two days/a week ago*
**la semaine dernière** *last week*; **l'année dernière** *last year*
**mardi dernier** *last Tuesday*

**pendant les années soixante** *in the '60s*
**au vingtième/vingt et unième siècle** *in the 20th/21st century*

# checkpoint 2

1 What's the French for a) *nil*, b) *comma*?

2 Is **cent soixante-dix-neuf** greater or smaller than **cent quatre-vingt-dix-sept**?

3 Write down the French for 8, 18, 28, 78 and 88.

4 Now write **deux millions quatre cent mille** in numbers, punctuating it the French way.

5 What do these mean?

a **Il est cinq heures.**
b **à sept heures du soir**
c **après minuit**
d **hier soir à sept heures**
e **à huit heures et demie**
f **le premier août**
g **vers une heure**
h **vendredi prochain**
i **à onze heures pile**
j **jusqu'à dix heures**

6 ... and how do you say these times in French?

**a** *it's 11 o'clock*
**b** *at nine am*
**c** *at 12 noon*
**d** *after 18.00*
**e** *at exactly 09.00*
**f** *tomorrow at ten o'clock*
**g** *yesterday at 10.00*
**h** *on Sunday at 16.00*
**i** *at seven o'clock every day*
**j** *before three o'clock in the afternoon*

7 What are the three different French words for *in* in these phrases: a) *in winter* b) *in ten minutes' time* c) *in the '70s?*

8 What do you think **une quinzaine de jours** means?

9 In French, write the date of *New Year's Day*, *Christmas Day* and *New Year's Eve*.

10 What time is **le train de seize heures quarante-quatre** expected?

11 **soixante,** **, quatre-vingts** What's missing from the sequence?

12 What are the various ways of saying 1789 in French?

13 Is **printemps**, **été**, **automne** or **hiver** the French for *spring*?

14 What do you think **soixante-quinze pour cent** means?

# Nouns

**Nouns** are the words for

- living beings: man, sister, doctor, lion, Anton
- things: table, water, night, lesson, sport
- places: country, town, France, Paris
- concepts: beauty, freedom, time, democracy

Every single French noun – not just the words for people – is either masculine (m) or feminine (f). This is its **gender**, and you need to know a noun's gender because words used with it, such as articles and adjectives, have corresponding masculine and feminine forms.

So, whenever you come across a new noun, make a point of associating it with its gender by learning it with an article – **le** *the* or **un** *a* for a masculine noun and **la** or **une** for a feminine noun.

As in English, most nouns in French add **s** for the plural. Unlike English, the s isn't usually pronounced in French. The article, **les** *the* or **des** *some*, shows that the noun is plural.

In an English-French dictionary, abbreviations to look out for include *n* noun, *m* masculine, *f* feminine, *sing* singular, *pl* plural.

If you look up *car* and *horse*, this is what you might find:

**car** *n* automobile *f*, voiture *f*: *by* ~ en voiture; ~ *park n* parc *m* de stationnement, parking *m*

**horse** *n* cheval *m* [*gym*] cheval sautoir *m*: ~ *race* course *f* de chevaux; ~ *riding* équitation *f*; *rocking* ~ cheval à bascule; *I could eat a* ~*!* J'ai une faim de loup!

## people: the family

As you might expect, nouns for male family members are masculine and those for females feminine:

| m | | f | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **un père** | *father* | **une mère** | *mother* |
| **un mari** | *husband* | **une femme** | *wife* |
| **un fils** | *son* | **une fille** | *daughter* |
| **un frère** | *brother* | **une sœur** | *sister* |
| **un grand-père** | *grandfather* | **une grand-mère** | *grandmother* |
| **un petit-fils** | *grandson* | **une petite-fille** | *granddaughter* |
| **un oncle** | *uncle* | **une tante** | *aunt* |
| **un cousin** | *cousin (male)* | **une cousine** | *cousin (female)* |
| **un neveu** | *nephew* | **une nièce** | *niece* |
| **un homme** | *man* | **une femme** | *woman* |
| **Monsieur** | *Mr* | **Madame** | *Mrs* |
| **un beau-père** | *father-in-law*<br>*stepfather* | **une belle-mère** | *mother-in-law*<br>*stepmother* |
| **un beau-frère** | *brother-in-law* | **une belle-sœur** | *sister-in-law* |
| **un beau-fils** | *son-in-law*<br>*stepson* | **une belle-fille** | *daughter-in-law*<br>*stepdaughter* |
| **un demi-frère** | *stepbrother* | **une demi-sœur** | *stepsister* |
| **un parrain** | *godfather* | **une marraine** | *godmother* |

**Enfant** *child* can be either masculine or feminine (**un enfant** or **une enfant**) but **bébé** *baby* is always masculine (**un bébé**).
**Chloë est une belle enfant**. *Chloe is a beautiful child.*
**Chloë est un beau bébé**. *Chloe is a beautiful baby.*

A few words are always feminine, even when they refer to a man:
**personne** *person*, **vedette** *star*, **idole** *idol*, **victime** *victim*

## ... and the workplace

Many words for occupations have different endings according to whether they refer to a man or a woman. In many cases it's simply a matter of adding **e** for the feminine – but remember that this makes quite a difference to the pronunciation:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **-e** | **un avocat** | **une avocate** | *lawyer* |
| | **un étudiant** | **une étudiante** | *student* |
| | **un employé** | **une employée** | *employee* |
| **-ière** | **un caissier** | **une caissière** | *cashier, check-out assistant* |
| | **un infirmier** | **une infirmière** | *nurse* |
| **-ienne** | **un informaticien** | **une informaticienne** | *IT technician* |
| | **un musicien** | **une musicienne** | *musician* |
| | **un pharmacien** | **une pharmacienne** | *pharmacist* |
| **-euse** | **un serveur** | **une serveuse** | *waiter/waitress* |
| | **un vendeur** | **une vendeuse** | *salesman/woman* |
| | **un chanteur** | **une chanteuse** | *singer* |
| **-trice** | **un acteur** | **une actrice** | *actor/actress* |
| | **un directeur** | **une directrice** | *manager/ess* |
| | **un rédacteur** | **une rédactrice** | *editor* |

Other occupations use the same word for men and women:

**un/une architecte** *architect*
**un/une comptable** *accountant*
**un/une fonctionnaire** *civil servant*
**un/une journaliste** *journalist*
**un/une collègue** *colleague*
**un/une secrétaire** *secretary*

The words for some traditional male roles are masculine even when they refer to a woman: **un médecin** *doctor*, **un ingénieur** *engineer* **un chef** *boss*, **un peintre** *painter*.
Sometimes **femme** is added: **une femme médecin** *a woman doctor.*

French is changing in line with the workplace, and new feminine forms of traditionally male occupations – such as **une chirurgienne** *surgeon* – are becoming commonplace. In Canada and Switzerland you now hear **une professeur**, although it's still the masculine **un professeur** for both men and women in France.

## other masculine nouns

Although you can't usually tell from looking at a noun what its gender is, most nouns with the following endings are masculine. Beware of exceptions, though!

**-et, -isme, -ment**

**un jouet** *toy*, **un carnet** *notebook*, **le journalisme** *journalism*, **le terrorisme** *terrorism*, **un monument** *monument*, **un gouvernement** *government*, **un appartement** *flat*
Exceptions include **une jument** *mare* and **une forêt** *forest*.

**-ège, -age**

**un collège** *school*, **un cortège** *procession*, **un fromage** *cheese*, **un village** *village*
Exceptions include **la Norvège** *Norway*, **une image** *picture* and many one-syllable nouns such as **une cage**, **une rage**, **une plage** *beach*.

**-ou, -eau**

**un hibou** *owl*, **un bijou** *jewel*, **un bateau** *boat*, **un gâteau** *cake*, **un cadeau** *present*, **un château** *castle*
Exceptions include **l'eau** *water* and **la peau** *skin*.

**-ier, -eur**

**un cahier** *exercise book*, **un pompier** *firefighter*, **un ascenseur** *lift*, **un aspirateur** *vacuum cleaner*
Exceptions include **la peur** *fear*, **une douleur** *pain*, **la chaleur** *heat*.

**-acle, -ail**

**un miracle**, **un obstacle**, **le travail** *work*, **l'ail** *garlic*
Exceptions include **une débâcle** *rout*.

The following categories of noun are all masculine:

- days of the week, months and seasons:
  **le lundi** *Monday*, **le printemps** *spring*, **l'été** *summer*, **l'automne** *autumn*, **l'hiver** *winter*
- metric weights and measures: **un litre**, **un demi-kilo**
- languages: **le français** *French*, **le russe** *Russian*

## other feminine nouns

There are also endings associated with feminine nouns. Many of the words with these endings are identical to the English when you see them written down but not, of course, when you hear them.

**-tion, -aison**

**une question, une situation, une solution, une opération, une nation, l'équitation** *horse riding*, **la natation** *swimming*, **l'alimentation** *food*, **une maison** *house*, **une saison** *season*

**-ette, -esse**

**une fillette** *little girl*, **une chaussette** *sock*, **une toilette** *wash*, **la tristesse** *sadness*, **la jeunesse** *youth*, **la vitesse** *speed*, **la presse** *press, newspapers*, **une messe** *Roman Catholic mass*

**-ence, -ance, -ense, -anse**

**une différence, la violence, la patience, une science, une agence** *agency*, **la concurrence** *competition*, **une balance** *scales*, **une enfance** *childhood*, **une licence, la défense, une danse** *dance*

Exceptions include **le silence**.

**-ure**

**une chaussure** *shoe*, **une blessure** *wound*, **une culture** *culture*, **la nourriture** *food*

**-ité**

**une cité, une activité, la liberté, la sérénité, une université**

**-ée**

**une entrée** *entrance, first course*, **une chaussée** *highway*, **une employée** *female employee*

Exceptions include **un musée** *museum*, **un lycée** *secondary school*.

The following categories of noun are all feminine:

- continents: **l'Asie, l'Afrique, l'Europe, l'Amérique**
- many countries: **la France, la Suisse** *Switzerland*, **la Belgique**. But not **le Canada, le Japon, le Maroc** *Morocco*, **le Brésil, le Mexique** or **les États-Unis** *United States*.
- most rivers: **la Seine, la Tamise** *Thames*, **la Loire**. But not **le Rhône** or **le Rhin** *Rhine*.

## nouns that can be masculine or feminine

Some nouns can be either masculine or feminine, and they have different meanings depending on the gender:

| m | | f | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **un aide** | *assistant* | **l'aide** | *assistance* |
| **un boum** | *bang* | **une boum** | *party* |
| **un crêpe** | *crepe (material)* | **une crêpe** | *thin pancake* |
| **un finale** | *finale (musical)* | **une finale** | *final (sport)* |
| **un livre** | *book* | **une livre** | *pound (sterling or weight)* |
| **un mémoire** | *memo* | **une mémoire** | *memory* |
| **un mode** | *way, method* | **la mode** | *fashion* |
| **un mort** | *dead (male) body* | **la mort** | *death* |
| **un page** | *page boy* | **une page** | *page* |
| **un poêle** | *stove* | **une poêle** | *frying pan* |
| **un poste** | *job, radio/TV set* | **la poste** | *post office, mail* |
| **un tour** | *tour, turn* | **une tour** | *tower* |
| **un voile** | *veil* | **une voile** | *sail, sailing* |

## compound nouns

Compound nouns fall into three categories:

- two nouns together. The gender is the gender of the first noun:
  **un wagon-lit** *sleeping car*
  **une porte-fenêtre** *French window*
  **un chou-fleur** *cauliflower*
  **une pause-café** *coffee break*
  … although **un tête-à-tête** is masculine.

- verb + noun. These are masculine:
  **un porte-monnaie** *purse*
  **un pare-brise** *windscreen*
  **un gratte-ciel** *skyscraper*

- adjective or preposition + noun. These have the gender of the noun:
  **un grand-père** *grandfather*
  **une grande-mère** *grandmother*
  **un après-midi** *afternoon*
  **une chauve-souris** *bat*
  **un coffre-fort** *safe*
  **une demi-heure** *half (an) hour*

## making nouns plural

- Most nouns, masculine and feminine, form their plural by adding **s**:
  **un/une enfant → des enfants** *children*
  **une femme → des femmes** *women*
  **un hôtel → des hôtels** *hotels*

- If the singular ends in **-s**, **-x**, or **-z**, the plural stays the same:
  **un fils → des fils** *sons, children*; **un nez → des nez** *noses;*
  **un prix → des prix** *prices*

- **-al** and **-ail** usually change to **-aux**
  **un animal → des animaux** *animals*; **un journal → des journaux** *newspapers*; **un cheval → des chevaux** *horses*; **un travail → des travaux** *works*
  Exceptions include **un bal** *dance*, **un festival**, **un carnaval** and **un détail**, which add **s**.

- **-eu, -eau** and some words ending in **-ou** add **x**
  **un lieu → des lieux** *places*; **un cheveu → des cheveux** *hair*; **un vœu → des vœux** *wishes*; **un gâteau → des gâteaux** *cakes*; **un château → des châteaux** *castles*; **l'eau** (f) **→ les eaux** *waters*; **un bijou → des bijoux** *jewels, jewellery*; **un chou → des choux** *cabbages*; **un caillou → des cailloux** *pebbles*
  Exceptions include **un pneu** *tyre*, **un trou** *hole* and **un clou** *nail,* which add **s**.

- A few nouns are irregular in the plural:
  **un œil → les yeux** *eyes*; **monsieur → messieurs** *gentlemen*;
  **madame → mesdames** *ladies*

There are few hard-and-fast rules for making compound nouns plural, and the easiest thing to do is to learn these as you come across them.

- Two nouns, and a noun + adjective, usually change both parts:
  **des wagons-lits, des choux-fleurs**
  **des grands-pères, des chauves-souris**
- Many don't change at all: **des porte-monnaie, des gratte-ciel, des pare-brise**
- Some have alternative forms: you'll see **des après-midi** as often as **des après-midis** for *afternoons*. And you'll see **des allers-retours** for *return tickets* whereas you might expect **des aller-retours**.

# word power

Literally hundreds of nouns are identical in French and English. These include nouns ending in **-tion**, **-sion**, **-age**, **-nce**, **-nt**, **-ble** and **-acle**:
**abdication, abolition, admission, vision, camouflage, bandage, arrogance, assurance, astringent, contingent, spectacle, obstacle, impossible, probable**

However, they're only identical when you see them written down. When they're spoken, they sound quite different. In French, for example, **expert** is pronounced *experr.*

There are many other nouns which are nearly the same in both languages. Sometimes the French version has an accent because of the different pronunciation.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *ism* | **isme** | **le communisme, l'égoïsme** (m), **le racisme, le réalisme, le tourisme** |
| *ist* | **iste** | **un/une dentiste, un/une linguiste, un/une optimiste, un/une pessimiste, un/une pianiste** |
| *y* (abstract concepts) | **ie** | **l'astrologie** (f), **l'astronomie** (f), **l'économie** (f), **la géographie, la philosophie, la sociologie** |
| *ty* | **té** | **la beauté, l'égalité, la fraternité, la liberté, l'université** (f) |
| *ologist* | **ologue** | **un/une archéologue, un/une astrologue, un/une cardiologue, un/une psychologue, un/une sociologue** But **un/une écologiste** |
| *our* (abstract concepts) | **eur** | **une couleur, une faveur,un honneur, une odeur, une rumeur, une saveur, la valeur** |
| *or/er* (often people) | **eur** | **un boxeur, un dineur, un docteur, un employeur, un porteur, un tour-opérateur, un vendeur** |

Look out too for:

- English words beginning with an *s* followed by a consonant. These are often spelt **é-** or **es-** in French: *screen* → **un écran**; *school* → **une école**; *sponge* → **une éponge**; *space* → **un espace**; *Spain* → **l'Espagne** (f)
- French words with a circumflex, which often indicates the presence of an *s* in English: **un hôpital**, **une forêt**, **une île**, **la hâte** *haste*, **un hôte** *host, guest*

## false friends

Not all nouns mean what they appear to mean:

| | |
|---|---|
| **l'actualité** (f) means *current affairs* | *actuality* is **la réalité** |
| **un car** means *coach* | *car* is **une voiture** |
| **une casquette** means *cap* | *casket* is **un coffret** |
| **une cave** means *cellar* | *cave* is **une grotte** |
| **la chair** means *flesh* | *chair* is **une chaise** |
| **la chance** means *luck* | *chance* (opportunity) is **une occasion** |
| **le coin** means *corner, spot* | *coin* is **une pièce (de monnaie)** |
| **le collège** means *school* | *college* is **une université** |
| **un crayon** means *pencil* | *crayon* is **un crayon de couleur** |
| **la déception** means *disappointment* | *deception* is **la tromperie** |
| **une journée** means *day* | *journey* is **un voyage** |
| **le lard** means *bacon* | *lard* is **le saindoux** |
| **une librairie** means *bookshop* | *library* is **une bibliothèque** |
| **un menu** means *set menu* | *menu* is **une carte** |
| **une pièce** means *room* or *play* | *piece* is **un morceau** |
| **une place** means *square* | *place* is **un lieu** or **un endroit** |
| **un préservatif** means *condom* | *preservative* is **un conservateur** |
| **une prune** means *plum* | *prune* is **un pruneau** |
| **un raisin** means *grape* | *raisin* is **un raisin sec** |
| **une réunion** means *meeting* | as well as *reunion* |
| **un store** means *blind* | *store* is **un magasin** |
| **une veste** means *jacket* | *vest* is **un maillot de corps** |
| **un talon** means *heel* | *talon* is **une serre** |
| **les vacances** (f) means *holidays* | *vacancy* is **une chambre libre** (*hotel*) or **un poste** (*job*) |
| **un stage** means (*training*) *course* | *stage* is **une scène** (*theatre*) or **une étape** (*point*) |

# checkpoint 3

**1** Write m, f, or m/f in the boxes depending on whether the noun is masculine, feminine or could be either.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **gâteau** | ☐ | **chou-fleur** | ☐ | **personne** | ☐ |
| **toilette** | ☐ | **médecin** | ☐ | **pare-brise** | ☐ |
| **collègue** | ☐ | **victime** | ☐ | **chaussure** | ☐ |
| **cousine** | ☐ | **silence** | ☐ | **enfant** | ☐ |

**2** What are these in the plural?

| | |
|---|---|
| **porc** ..... | **neveu** ..... |
| **cadeau** ..... | **chat** ..... |
| **souris** ..... | **café** ..... |
| **chou** ..... | **monument** ..... |
| **personne** ..... | **œil** ..... |
| **lieu** ..... | **fonctionnaire** ..... |
| **prix** ..... | **pneu** ..... |
| **enfant** ..... | **monsieur** ..... |
| **cheval** ..... | **hôpital** ..... |
| **grenouille** ..... | **pays** ..... |

**3** Is **eau** masculine or feminine?

**4** What two meanings does **livre** have?

**5** Does **musiciennes** mean one male musician, one female musician, several male musicians, several female musicians or a mixed group?

**6** Think of a word that's feminine even when it refers to a man.

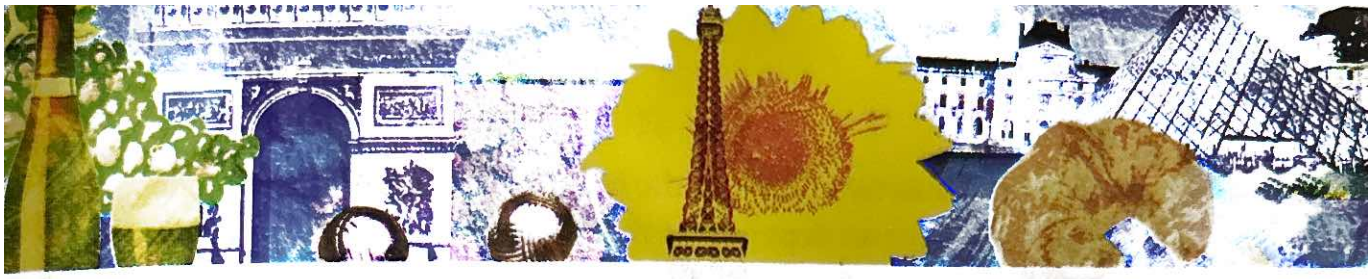
**7** Can you work out the French for a) *biology*, b) *inflation*, c) *probability*, d) *criminologist*, e) *obstacle*, f) *absence*, g) *journalism*?

**8** What are the two meanings of **belle-mère**?

**9** Does **Bonne journée** mean *Have a good day* or *Have a good trip*?

**10** What do you think **tempête** is in English?

**11** Given that **rédacteur** is *male editor* and **rédactrice** *female editor*, what's the female equivalent of **traducteur** *translator*?



# Articles: the, a, some

An **article** is used with a noun to show whether you're talking about something which is specific or defined: ***the*** *house*, ***the*** *houses*, or something which is not: ***a*** *house*, ***some*** *houses*.

Grammatically, articles fall into three categories:

- the definite article: *the*
- the indefinite article: *a/an*
- the partitive article: *some/any*

In French there are four words for *the*, and the one you use depends on whether the following noun is masculine or feminine, singular or plural; whether it begins with a vowel or a consonant. *A/an* can be **un** or **une** and there are several ways of saying *some* and *any*, depending again on the gender of the following noun.

There's a difference too in the way articles are used. French often uses the definite article in sentences where it's not used in English – for instance when generalising, as in **J'aime le chocolat** *I like chocolate* or **L'exercice est important** *Exercise is important.*

On the other hand, French leaves out the indefinite article in some sentences where it's needed in English, for example **Elle est médecin** *She's a doctor.*

## a: un, une

Like English, French has two forms of the indefinite article. In English, however, the use of *a* or *an* depends on the initial sound of the following word, whereas in French the use of **un** or **une** depends on the gender (masculine or feminine) of the noun that the article relates to.

- **masculine**
  The word for *a/an* with masculine nouns is **un**:
  **un homme** *a man*
  **un ami** *a (male) friend*
  **un verre de vin** *a glass of wine*
  **un petit livre** *a little book*
  **un euro** *a euro*

- **feminine**
  The word for *a/an* with feminine nouns is **une**:
  **une femme** *a woman*
  **une amie** *a (female) friend*
  **une maison** *a house*
  **une bouteille de vin** *a bottle of wine*
  **une bonne idée** *a good idea*
  **une personne** *a person (male or female)*

In negative sentences *a/an* is always **de**, which shortens to **d'** before a vowel:
**Je n'ai pas de dictionnaire.** *I haven't got a dictionary.*
**Je n'ai pas d'excuse.** *I haven't got an excuse.*

- **plural**
  **Un** and **une** have a plural in French: **des**, which is used whenever you're talking about an unspecific plural noun. The nearest English equivalent is *some* but, whereas *some* is omitted more often than not, **des** can't be omitted:
  **J'ai des amis qui ...** *I've got (some) friends who ...*
  **Nous avons acheté des fleurs.** *We bought (some) flowers.*

## ... and how to use them

**Un** and **une** are used in pretty much the same circumstances as *a/an* in English, i.e. before a noun that isn't referring to a specific person or thing.

However, unlike English, they're not used:

- with nouns denoting occupation and marital status:
  **Je suis étudiant.** *I'm a student.*
  **Mathis est journaliste.** *Mathis is a journalist.*
  **Mon mari est cuisinier.** *My husband is a cook.*
  **Ma grand-mère est veuve.** *My grandmother is a widow.*

  unless those nouns have additional information added to them:
  **Mon mari est un excellent cuisinier.** *My husband is an excellent cook.*

- with nouns denoting nationality and religion (where English has a choice):
  **Il est irlandais.** *He is Irish* or *He is an Irishman.*
  **Vous êtes catholique?** *Are you (a) Catholic?*

- before 100 and 1,000 and sometimes before *half*:
  **Ça coûte cent euros.** *It costs a hundred euros.*
  **Je l'ai dit mille fois.** *I've said it a thousand times.*
  **deux ans et demi** *two and a half years*
  But: **un demi-litre** *half a litre*

- after **quel** and **quelle** in exclamations:
  **Quel joli nom!** *What a lovely name!*
  **Quelle bonne idée!** *What a good idea!*
  **Quel dommage!** *What a pity!*
  **Quelle coïncidence!** *What a coincidence!*

## the: le, la, l', les

There are four different words for *the* in French: **le**, **la**, **l'**, **les**.
Which one you use depends on three things:

- whether the noun with the article is masculine or feminine
- whether that noun is singular or plural
- the first letter of the word immediately following the article

- **masculine**
  In the singular, the word for *the* is **le** with a masculine noun. It shortens to **l'** when the next word begins with a vowel:
  **le directeur** *the director*
  **le jardin** *the garden*
  **l'enfant** *the child*
  **l'autre directeur** *the other director*

- **feminine**
  In the singular, the word for *the* is **la** with a feminine noun. It shortens to **l'** when the next word begins with a vowel:
  **la femme** *the woman*
  **la ville** *the town*
  **l'église** *the church*
  **l'autre femme** *the other woman*

Words beginning with **h** generally take **l'**, except on a few occasions when the **h** acts like a consonant (page 17). These are often words of foreign origin (**le héros**, **le hamman**, **le hall**):
**le haricot vert** *the French bean*; **l'hôtel** (m) *the hotel*;
**l'homme** *the man;* **la haute cuisine**; **l'herbe** *the grass*

- **plural**
  The word for *the* with all plural nouns is **les**:
  **les directeurs** *the directors*; **les enfants** *the children*; **les hommes** *the men*; **les haricots verts** *the French beans*; **les femmes** *the women*; **les églises** *the churches*

## ... and when to use them

Like *the* in English, **le**, **la**, **l'**, **les** are used before a noun referring to a specific person or thing. In French they're also needed:

- when making generalisations:
  **Les infirmières ont beaucoup de patience.** *Nurses have a lot of patience.*
  **Je déteste les escargots.** *I hate snails.*
  **J'adore la cuisine française.** *I love French cooking.*

- with abstract nouns and illnesses:
  **C'est la vie.** *That's life.*
  **L'amour est plus important que l'argent.** *Love is more important than money.*
  **Il a la rougeole/la varicelle.** *He's got measles/chicken pox.*
  However, the article isn't used after **avec** or **sans**: **avec difficulté** *with difficulty*; **sans efforts** *without any effort.*

- with the names of continents, countries, and regions:
  **l'Afrique, la Chine, le Canada, les Etats-Unis**
  **la Corse, le Québec, la Bretagne, le Kent, le Midi de la France**

- with languages:
  **J'apprends le chinois.** *I'm learning Chinese.*
  **Vous comprenez l'arabe?** *Do you understand Arabic?*
  ... although not immediately after **parler** or **en**:
  **Elle parle français.** *She speaks French.*
  **Comment dit-on en français ...?** *How do you say .... in French?*

- when referring to parts of the body where English uses *my*, *his*, *her* etc:
  **Fermez les yeux.** *Close your eyes.*
  **Je vais me laver les cheveux.** *I'm going to wash my hair.*
  **Il s'est foulé la cheville.** *He's sprained his ankle.*

- with some time expressions (pages 30-31):
  **la semaine prochaine** *next week*; **l'année dernière** *last year*
  **J'arrive le vingt mars.** *I'm arriving on March 20th.*
  **On va à la mosquée le vendredi.** *We go to the mosque on Fridays.*

- when talking about prices, where English uses *a* or *per*:
  **cinq euros le kilo** *5 euros per/a kilo*
  **deux euros la tranche** *2 euros per/a slice*

## the + à, de

When *the* follows **à** *at, to, in*
**de** *from, of*
they combine to make the following forms:

| | le | la | l' | les |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| à | au | à la | à l' | aux |
| de | du | de la | de l' | des |

**au centre-ville** *in/to the town centre*
**au Maroc** *in/to Morocco*
**Nous sommes arrivés au Havre.** *We've arrived in Le Havre.*
**à la gare** *at/to the station*
**à l'hôtel** *at/to the hotel*
**aux Pays Bas** *in/to the Netherlands*
**J'ai mal aux dents.** *I've got toothache.*

**la femme du président** *the president's wife*
**la capitale du Canada** *the capital of Canada*
**Il vient du Québec.** *He comes from Quebec.*
**la population de la France** *the population of France*
**au pied de l'escalier** *at the bottom of the stairs*
**le charme des petits villages** *the charm of the small villages*
**Il est rentré des Etats-Unis.** *He has come back from the USA.*

When you're speaking French, remember that you need to sound the final letter of **un**, **les**, **des** and **aux** before a word starting with a vowel or most words starting with **h**. The **s** and **x** of **des**, **les** and **aux** sound like a **z**: **un ami, aux Etats-unis, des eglises, les hommes.**

## some/any

- **Du, de la, de l'** and **des** are used in a similar, but not identical, way to *some* and *any* in English.
  **Je vais acheter du vin.** *I'm going to buy some wine.*
  **Je voudrais de l'eau minérale.** *I'd like some mineral water.*
  **Vous avez des épinards?** *Do you have any spinach?*

- They're used in this way even when English might leave them out, and they're repeated before each noun in a list:
  **J'ai apporté du pain.** *I've brought (some) bread.*
  **On a mangé des croissants.** *We ate (some) croissants.*
  **Donnez-moi des olives, du fromage et de l'huile.** *Give me some olives, (some) cheese and (some) oil.*

- In negative sentences **de** is used instead, regardless of the gender and number of the noun:
  **Je n'ai pas de sœurs.** *I haven't got any sisters.*
  **Il n'y a pas de champagne.** *There isn't any champagne.*
  **Je n'ai pas acheté de chocolat.** *I didn't buy (any) chocolate.*

- There are other ways of translating *some* and *any*.
  When *some* means *a few*, you can use **quelques** followed by a plural noun:
  **Il a dit quelques mots.** *He said some (a few) words.*
  **il y a quelques jours** *some (a few) days ago*

- In the negative, the singular **aucun** or **aucune** can be used to express the idea *not a single*. They replace **pas**, which is the usual negative word:
  **Je ne connais aucun de vos collègues.** *I don't know any of your colleagues.* (i.e. *I don't know a single one of your colleagues.*)
  **Je n'ai aucune idée.** *I've got no idea.* (i.e. *not a single idea*)

- When *some* and *any* appear without a noun, they're translated by the pronoun **en** (see page 83):
  **Il y en a qui pensent** ... *Some (people) think ...*
  **Je n'en ai pas.** *I haven't got any.*

# checkpoint 4

1 Choose **un** or **une** for these nouns. If in doubt about what gender they are, check with pages 33-38.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ..... **chef** | ..... **infirmière** | ..... **secrétaire** |
| ..... **vedette** | ..... **université** | ..... **solution** |
| ..... **personne** | ..... **gâteau** | ..... **eau minérale** |
| ..... **question** | ..... **musée** | ..... **chaussette** |
| ..... **village** | ..... **lycée** | ..... **serveuse** |

2 Now put **le**, **la** or **l'** in front of the same nouns.

3 How would you combine **à** with *the* to ask directions to the following places? Begin each question with **Pour aller ...?**

a **(la) gare** .....
b **(l')hôtel de ville** .....
c **(Les) Halles** .....
d **(Le) Louvre** .....

And how would you combine **de** with *the* to ask for some of these items in the market? Begin each sentence with **Je voudrais ...**

e **(l')eau minérale** .....
f **(les) pommes** .....
g **(le) Brie** .....
h **(la) bière** .....

4 How would you ask Hugo, your new acquaintance (use **vous**):

a if he is French?
b if he is a student?
c whether he speaks English?
d whether he likes Chinese cooking?

# Adjectives

Adjectives are words that describe nouns and pronouns:
We have a **small** garden.
The film was **superb**.
She is **French**.
Take the **second** turning.
I prefer **red** wine.

There are two major differences in the way French and English adjectives are used:

- **Position**
  French adjectives generally – though not always – go after the noun: **crème brûlée**, **femme fatale**, **Rive Gauche** *Left Bank*, **Union européenne** *European Union*.

- **Agreement**
  The ending of a French adjective varies depending on the noun it's describing: it has to be masculine or feminine, singular or plural to agree with, i.e. match, that noun: **Royaume-Uni** *United Kingdom*, **Etats-Unis** *United States*, **Nations Unies** *United Nations*.

The dictionary abbreviations for *adjective* are *adj* in English and French (the full word is **adjectif**).

If you look up *clear*, this is what you might find:

**clear** *adj* **1.** clair, transparent, lucide **2.** manifeste, évident: *as ~ as daylight* clair comme le jour **3.** net: *~ profit* bénéfice clair; *~ conscience* conscience nette **4.** libre: *all~* fin d'alerte

# word power

Many adjectives look exactly the same in English and French; many others are only differentiated by having an accent in French. Examples include adjectives ending in **-able**, **-al**, **-ant**, **-ent** and **-ible**, for example:
**capable, durable, probable, global, local, général, national dominant, élégant, important, absent, différent, récent incompatible, possible**

There are hundreds of other English adjectives which you can easily convert to French – it's simply a matter of recognising and converting the ending.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *al* | **el** | **artificiel, habituel, sensationnel, traditionnel, universel** |
| *ic(al)* | **ique** | **classique, diplomatique, économique, érotique, fantastique, islamique, magique, microscopique, politique, romantique, tragique**<br>and many more ending in *-ological*: **archéologique, astrologique, écologique, psychologique** |
| *ive* | **if** | **actif, aggressif, excessif, impulsif, intensif, négatif** |
| *ous* | **eux** | **ambitieux, délicieux, furieux, généreux, ingénieux, nombreux, précieux, sérieux** |

Remember that not one of these adjectives will sound the same in French as it does in English. It's worth making the time to say several of them out loud – as well as fixing the French version in your mind, it's good pronunciation practice. If you're not sure of some of the sounds, have another look at Sounds and Spelling on page 15.

## false friends

Some adjectives, however, don't mean what you might think they mean:

| | |
|---|---|
| **actuel** means *current* | *actual* is **réel** |
| **effectif** means *real* | *effective* is **efficace** |
| **éventuel** means *possible* | *eventual* is **ultime** |
| **formidable** means *great* | *formidable* is **redoutable** |
| **gentil** means *kind* | *gentle* is **doux** |
| **large** means *wide* | *large* is **grand** |
| **rude** means *tough* | *rude* is **impoli** |
| **sensible** means *sensitive* | *sensible* is **sensé** |
| **sympathique** means *nice* | *sympathetic* is **compatissant** |
| **gros** means *fat* | *gross* is **brut** (profit) or **dégoûtant** *(disgusting)* |

Learning words in sets is more effective than learning them individually. This doesn't only mean learning words relating to a particular topic or situation but, for example, learning an adjective together with its opposite or a word with a similar meaning: **grand/petit, vieux/ancien**. Or you could learn some of the above false friends as pairs.

If you have to search for the partner word, so much the better because the more active your learning is, the more your brain will be disposed to remember the words.

Create your own associations. If you were asked to think of a partner for **blanc** *white*, would you choose **noir** *black* or **rouge** (wine connection)? Both? Or another word altogether?

If you use an adjective after **quelque chose** *something* or **rien** *nothing*, you need to put **de** between them. The adjective is in the masculine form:

**quelque chose d'important** *something important*
**quelque chose de terrible** *something awful*
**rien de sérieux** *nothing serious*
**rien de spécial** *nothing special*

# adjective endings and agreement

In a dictionary, adjectives are listed in the masculine singular. But adjectives change their ending, depending on whether the noun being described is masculine or feminine, singular or plural.

- Most adjectives have four possible forms:

| | |
|---|---|
| m sing | **un livre vert** *a green book* |
| f sing | **une jupe verte** *a green skirt* |
| m pl | **des livres verts** *green books* |
| f pl | **des jupes vertes** *green skirts* |

- If the adjective already ends in **-e**, the feminine form doesn't add another one so is the same as the masculine:

| | |
|---|---|
| m sing | **un bâtiment moderne** *a modern building* |
| f sing | **une ville moderne** *a modern town* |
| m pl | **des bâtiments modernes** *modern buildings* |
| f pl | **des villes modernes** *modern towns* |

- If the adjective already ends in **-s**, the masculine plural is the same as the masculine singular:

| | |
|---|---|
| m sing | **un écrivain français** *a French writer* |
| f sing | **une ville française** *a French town* |
| m pl | **des écrivains français** *French writers* |
| f pl | **des villes françaises** *French towns* |

An adjective describing more than one noun has the masculine plural ending except when both the nouns are feminine:
**Thierry et Nicolas sont français.**
**Fabienne et Charlotte sont françaises.**
**Thierry et Fabienne sont français.**

## spelling changes

- Adjectives ending in **-er** or **-ier** become **-ère** or **-ière** in the feminine:

| m sing | f sing | m pl | f pl |
|---|---|---|---|
| **cher** *expensive* | **chère** | **chers** | **chères** |
| **premier** *first* | **première** | **premiers** | **premières** |
| **dernier** *last* | **dernière** | **derniers** | **dernières** |

**le premier jour** *the first day*; **la semaine dernière** *last week*

- Adjectives ending in **-et** become **-ète** in the feminine:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **complet** *full* | **complète** | **complets** | **complètes** |
| **inquiet** *anxious* | **inquiète** | **inquiets** | **inquiètes** |

**une revue complète** *a complete review*; **des mères inquiètes** *worried mothers*

- Adjectives ending in **-f** change this to **-ve** in the feminine:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **actif** | **active** | **actifs** | **actives** |
| **neuf** *brand new* | **neuve** | **neufs** | **neuves** |

**une vie active** *an active life*; **des vêtements neufs** *new clothes*

- Adjectives ending in **-c** change this to **-che** in the feminine:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **blanc** *white* | **blanche** | **blancs** | **blanches** |
| **sec** *dry* | **sèche** | **secs** | **sèches** |

**des vin blancs et secs** *dry white wines*; **une chemise blanche** *a white blouse*

- Adjectives ending **-al** change this to **-aux** in the masculine plural:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **local** | **locale** | **locaux** | **locales** |
| **national** | **nationale** | **nationaux** | **nationales** |
| **digital** | **digitale** | **digitaux** | **digitales** |

**des journaux locaux** *local newspapers*; **des montres digitales** *digital watches*

- Adjectives ending in **-x** change this to **-se** in the feminine and stay the same in the masculine plural:

| m sing | f sing | m pl | f pl |
|---|---|---|---|
| **heureux** *happy* | **heureuse** | **heureux** | **heureuses** |
| **sérieux** *serious* | **sérieuse** | **sérieux** | **sérieuses** |
| **jaloux** *jealous* | **jalouse** | **jaloux** | **jalouses** |

**des maris jaloux** *jealous husbands*; **des femmes jalouses** *jealous wives*

Except for these:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **doux** *gentle, soft* | **douce** | **doux** | **douces** |
| **faux** *false* | **fausse** | **faux** | **fausses** |
| **roux** *red-haired* | **rousse** | **roux** | **rousses** |

**un billet doux** *love letter*; **des faux amis** *false friends*

- Some adjectives ending in **l**, **n**, **s** and **t** double the final consonant before adding **e** for the feminine:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **bon** *good* | **bonne** | **bons** | **bonnes** |
| **gentil** *kind* | **gentille** | **gentils** | **gentilles** |
| **mignon** *sweet* | **mignonne** | **mignons** | **mignonnes** |
| **italien** | **italienne** | **italiens** | **italiennes** |
| **bas** *low* | **basse** | **bas** | **basses** |
| **épais** *thick* | **épaisse** | **épais** | **épaisses** |
| **gros** *fat* | **grosse** | **gros** | **grosses** |
| **net** *clear* | **nette** | **nets** | **nettes** |

**une voix basse** *a low voice*; **des filles mignonnes** *sweet girls*

- **Long** adds **u** before the **e** of the feminine to keep the hard **g** sound. Similarly, **c** changes to **qu**.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **long** | **longue** | **longs** | **longues** |
| **public** | **publique** | **publics** | **publiques** |

# irregular adjectives

- Some adjectives have irregular feminine forms:

| m sing | f sing | m pl | f pl |
|---|---|---|---|
| **favori** | **favorite** | **favoris** | **favorites** |
| **frais** *fresh, cool* | **fraîche** | **frais** | **fraîches** |

**des livres favoris** *favourite books*; **la crème fraîche**

- A few common adjectives have special forms for the feminine and also for the masculine when it's used before a vowel or certain nouns beginning with **h** (page 17).

| m sing | m sing before vowel | f sing | m pl | f pl |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **beau** *beautiful* | **bel** | **belle** | **beaux** | **belles** |
| **fou** *mad, foolish* | **fol** | **folle** | **fous** | **folles** |
| **mou** *soft* | **mol** | **molle** | **mous** | **molles** |
| **vieux** *old* | **vieil** | **vieille** | **vieux** | **vieilles** |
| **nouveau** *new* | **nouvel** | **nouvelle** | **nouveaux** | **nouvelles** |

**un vieux bâtiment** *an old building* but **un vieil homme** *an old man*
**un beau jardin** *a beautiful garden* but **un bel arbre** *a beautiful tree*
**le nouveau chef** *the new boss* but **le nouvel an** *the new year*

Some adjectives don't change their ending:

- borrowed or shortened adjectives: **cool**, **chic**, **sympa** *nice*
  **la musique cool** *cool music*; **des parents sympa** *nice parents*; **une boutique chic** *a fashionable shop*
- colours that are the names of objects, such as **orange**; **marron** *brown* (n *chestnut*); **argent** *silver*; **turquoise**; **olive**; **kaki** *khaki*
  **des chaussures marron** *brown shoes*
  **des bijoux turquoise** *turquoise jewellery*
  But not **rose** and **violet**, which behave like other adjectives:
  **des chaussettes roses** *pink socks*
- colours using a combination of two words: **bleu marine** *navy blue*; **bleu-vert** *blue-green*; **pomme vert** *apple green*; **vert foncé** *dark green*; **jaune clair** *pale yellow*; **une veste bleu marine** *a navy blue jacket*; **des yeux bleu-vert** *blue-green eyes*; **une robe vert foncé** *a dark green dress*

# position of adjectives

When adjectives and nouns are next to each other, the adjective usually goes after the noun:

**un document important** *an important document*
**la musique classique** *classical music*
**des employés permanents** *permanent staff*
**les sciences sociales** *social sciences*

Some adjectives ***always*** go after the noun:

- colour
  **un chat noir** *a black cat*
  **des vins rouges** *red wines*
- shape
  **une table ronde** *a round table*
  **un gâteau carré** *a square cake*
- nationality
  **la cuisine française** *French cooking*
  **le drapeau américain** *the American flag*

There are a small number of very common adjectives which go before the noun:

**beau*** *beautiful*; **bon*** *good*; **court** *short*; **excellent**; **grand** *big*; **gros*** *fat*; **haut** *high*; **jeune** *young*; **joli** *pretty*; **long***; **mauvais** *bad*; **meilleur** *better/best*; **nouveau*** *new*; **petit** *little*; **vague**; **vieux*** *old* and the ordinal numbers **premier*** *first*, **deuxième** *second*, **troisième** *third* etc.

* see pages 55-57 for the irregular endings of these adjectives.

**un excellent cuisinier** *an excellent cook*
**une bonne ambiance** *a good atmosphere*
**les premiers jours** *the first days*
**les longs cheveux blonds** *long blonde hair*
**la meilleure chanson** *the best song*
**une jolie église blanche** *a pretty white church*

Most adjectives which normally go after the noun can be put beforehand for emphasis, or in set phrases:

**un important document** *a (particularly) important document*
**une rude journée** *a hard day*
**un sacré menteur** *a damn liar*
**un bref discours** *a (very) brief speech*

# adjectives with dual meanings

A few adjectives actually change their meaning depending on whether they go before or after the noun:

| | |
|---|---|
| **un ancien ami** *an old friend* | **un ami ancien** *an elderly friend* |
| **un brave homme** *a decent man* | **un homme brave** *a brave man* |
| **un cher ami** *a dear friend* | **un restaurant cher** *an expensive restaurant* |
| **la dernière semaine** *the last (final) week* | **la semaine dernière** *last (preceding) week* |
| **différentes idées** *various ideas* | **des idées différentes** *different ideas* |
| **divers problèmes** *various problems* | **problèmes divers** *different problems* |
| **une faible probabilité** *a remote possibility* | **un homme faible** *a weak man* |
| **un grand homme** *a great man* | **un homme grand** *a tall man* |
| **la même chose** *the same thing* | **la chose même** *the very thing* |
| **un modeste employé** *a humble/simple employee* | **un employé modeste** *a modest employee* |
| **Pauvre Marie!** *Poor Marie!* | **un pays pauvre** *a poor country* |
| **le prochain autobus** *the next bus* | **l'année prochaine** *next year* |
| **ma propre maison** *my own house* | **une maison propre** *a clean house* |
| **la seule femme** *the only woman* | **la femme seule** *the lonely woman* |
| **une simple idée** *just an idea* | **une idée simple** *a simple idea* |
| **une vraie histoire** *a real story* | **une histoire vraie** *a true story* |

In English we use the word *one(s)* with adjectives to avoid repeating a noun: *the red one, the old ones*. In French there's no equivalent of *one(s)* – you simply use the adjective with the ending matching the noun *one(s)* refers to:

**le bleu** *the blue one*, referring to **le livre** (m) *book*
**la première** *the first one*, referring to **la rue** *street*
**les petits** *the little ones*, referring to **les enfants** (m) *children*
**les blanches** *the white ones*, referring to **les chemises** (f) *shirts*

# checkpoint 5

**1** The adjectives in brackets are in their dictionary form. Where necessary, change the endings so that they agree with the nouns – then work out what the phrases mean:

a **le (premier) ministre**
b **la Maison (Blanc)**
c **un centre (sportif)**
d **la musique (populaire)**
e **une carte (vert)**
f **les grandes villes (français)**
g **Les Nations (Uni)**
h **une coïncidence (heureux)**
i **(deuxième) classe**
j **les femmes (fatal)**
k **l'art (moderne)**
l **la communauté (local)**

**2** Find adjectives in this unit with the opposite meaning from these:

a **difficile**
b **court**
c **premier**
d **bas**
e **vrai**
f **insignifiant**
g **privé**
h **foncé**

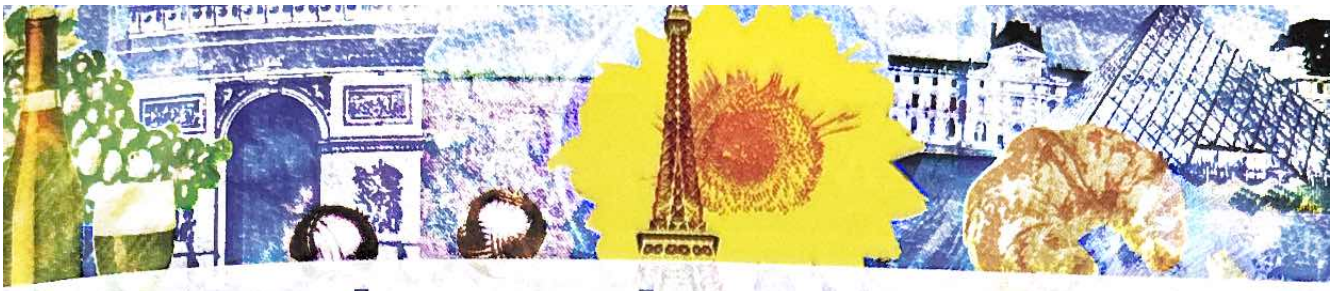
**3** Guess the French for the following. There are no false friends among them.

**a** *accessible*
**b** *brutal*
**c** *ethnic*
**d** *stagnant*
**e** *biological*
**f** *copious*
**g** *radical*
**h** *portable*
**i** *susceptible*
**j** *prestigious*

**4** Would the adjective go before or after the noun in these phrases? Have a go at translating them into French.

**a** *fatal attraction*
**b** *a dear colleague*
**c** *the only person*
**d** *French films*

**5** How would you say in French:
a) *the white one* (wine); *the big ones* (houses); *the old one* (a man); *the dark green one* (jacket); b) *something impossible*; *something different*; *nothing new*; *nothing special*?



# Adverbs and comparisons

Adverbs are words that add an extra dimension to:

- adjectives:
  Our garden is **very** *small*.
  I'm **really** *tired*, **too** *tired* to go out.

- verbs:
  They *cooked* it **perfectly**.
  He's *walking* **quickly**.

- other adverbs:
  They cooked it **absolutely** *perfectly*.
  He's walking **extremely** *quickly*, **rather** *quickly* for me.

- whole sentences:
  **Unfortunately** *we have to leave*.
  *They would be here* **otherwise**.

Just as many English adverbs end in *-ly*, many French ones end in **-ment**. They're easy to use because their endings never have to change, and they fit within a sentence in much the same way as their English equivalent. However, they don't usually go between the subject and its verb as they do in English in a sentence like *I sincerely hope*. In French the order is *I hope sincerely*.

The dictionary abbreviations for *adverb* are *adv* in both English and French (the French is **un adverbe**). If you look up *clearly* and *nicely*, this is what you might find:

**clearly** *adv* **1.** clairement, d'une manière claire **2.** [*after* voir, parler] clair **3.** [*obviously, without doubt*] évidemment, sans aucun doute

**nicely** *adv* **1.** bien: *everything was ~ done* tout était bien fait **2.** [*politely, kindly*] poliment, gentiment **3.** [*in a pleasant way*] agréablement

# word power

- Many adverbs are formed by adding **-ment** to the feminine singular form of an adjective:
  **autre** (m adj) → **autre** (f adj) → **autrement** (adv) *otherwise*
  **doux** → **douce** → **doucement** *gently, softly*
  **exacte** → **exacte** → **exactement** *exactly*
  **extraordinaire** → **extraordinaire** → **extraordinairement** *extraordinarily*
  **facile** → **facile** → **facilement** *easily*
  **franc** → **franche** → **franchement** *frankly*
  **habituel** → **habituelle** → **habituellement** *usually*
  **heureux** → **heureuse** → **heureusement** *happily*
  **immédiat** → **immédiate** → **immédiatement** *immediately*
  **sérieux** → **sérieuse** → **sérieusement** *seriously*
  **sincère** → **sincère** → **sincèrement** *sincerely*
  **soudain** → **soudaine** → **soudainement** *suddenly*

- Sometimes the **e** of the feminine ending becomes **é**:
  **énorme** → **énorme** → **énormément** *enormously*
  **précis** → **précise** → **précisément** *precisely*
  **profond** → **profonde** → **profondément** *profoundly*

- Adjectives that end in **-i** or **-u** add **-ment** to the masculine singular:
  **absolu** → **absolument** *absolutely*
  **poli** → **poliment** *politely*
  **résolu** → **résolument** *resolutely*
  **vrai** → **vraiment** *really*

- Most adjectives that end in **-ant** or **-ent** become **-amment** or **-emment**:
  **abondant** → **abondamment** *abundantly*
  **brillant** → **brillamment** *brilliantly*
  **courant** → **couramment** *fluently*
  **évident** → **évidemment** *evidently*
  **récent** → **récemment** *recently*
  But not **lent** → **lente** → **lentement** *slowly*

- Some adverbs are not derived from adjectives and don't end in **-ment**. These are often adverbs of position, place, quantity and time:
  **bien** *well*, **mal** *badly*, **vite** *quickly*
  **assez** *quite*, **si** *so*, **plutôt** *rather, quite*, **trop** *too*
  **très** *very*, **peu** *little*, **ensemble** *together*
  **aussi** *also*, **peut-être** *perhaps*, **presque** *almost*
  **maintenant** *now*, **déjà** *already*, **souvent** *often*, **bientôt** *soon*
  **toujours** *always*, **surtout** *especially*, **même** *even*
  **encore** *still*, **près** *near*, **loin** *far*

  **Vous parlez bien le français, très bien.** *You speak French well, very well.*
  **La maison est trop petite.** *The house is too small.*
  **Je suis plutôt sportif.** *I'm quite sporty.*
  **Ils sont toujours en retard.** *They're always late.*
  **Il parle peu en classe.** *He doesn't say much in class.* lit. *He speaks little.*

  Just as in English, a few French adjectives are used as adverbs:
  **Elle travaille dur.** *She works hard.*
  **Il parle fort/bas.** *He speaks loudly/in a low voice.*
  **Ça coûte cher.** *It costs a lot.* lit. *It costs dear.*

- Phrases can be used as alternatives to adverbs:
  **avec soin** *carefully*; **avec enthousiasme** *enthusiastically*
  **avec impatience** *impatiently*
  **d'une manière différente** *differently*; **d'un ton poli** *politely*
  **d'une façon élégante** *elegantly*
  **sans effort** *effortlessly*; **sans difficulté** *easily*
  **en hâte** *hastily*; **en colère** *angrily*
  **tout de suite** *immediately*; **tout à coup** *suddenly*

## false friends

**actuellement** means *currently*
**éventuellement** means *if need be*
**finalement** means *eventually*
**forcément** means *inevitably*

*actually* is **en fait**
*eventually* is **finalement**
*finally (= lastly)* is **enfin**
*forcefully* is **vigoureusement**

## adverbs of quantity

The following adverbs, which all refer to quantity, are always followed by **de** + noun without an article:

**assez de** *enough*
**beaucoup de** *a lot of, many*
**moins de** *less, fewer*
**plus de** *more*
**trop de** *too much, too many*
**autant de** *as much/many*
**combien de** *how many*
**pas mal de** *quite a bit/few*
**tant de** *so much, so many*

**J'ai mangé trop de bonbons.** *I've eaten too many sweets.*
**Il a pas mal d'argent.** *He's got quite a bit of money.*
**Il y a autant de femmes que d'hommes ici.** *There are as many women as men here.*

But **encore de** *more* and **la plupart de** *most* are followed by **de** + noun with its definite article:

**encore de la glace** *more ice cream*
**encore du vin** *more wine*
**la plupart du temps** *most of the time*
**la plupart des gens** *most people*

Some of these adverbs of quantity can be used before verbs. If this is the case, use **que**:

**Repose-toi autant que tu peux.** *Rest as much as you can.*

## position of adverbs

The position of adverbs isn't as flexible in French as it is in English. In most cases the adverb goes after the verb, and where there's more than one verb the adverb goes after the first verb.

**Je mange bien.** *I eat well.*
**J'ai bien mangé.** *I ate well.*
**Je vais vite faire les devoirs.** *I'm going to do my homework quickly.*

## plus and moins

**Plus** and **moins** are used in several ways:

- *plus* and *minus*, with numbers (the **s** of **plus** is pronounced when it's used in this sense):
  **deux plus deux font quatre** *2 + 2 = 4*
  **dix moins quatre font six** *10 - 4 = 6*
  **les personnes qui ont soixante-cinq ans et plus** *people aged 65+*
  **Il fait plus douze (degrés).** *It's plus 12 (degrees).*
  **Il fait moins cinq (degrés) dehors.** *It's minus five outside.*

- *more* and *less* or *fewer*, followed by **de** + noun:
  **Tu as plus d'énergie que moi.** *You've got more energy than me.*
  **Ils ont moins d'argent que nous.** *They've got less money than us.*
  **Je connais moins de gens que toi.** *I know fewer people than you.*
  **plus de vingt personnes** *more than 20 people*

- **moins** is used when telling the time:
  **deux heures moins dix** *ten to two*
  **une heure moins le quart** *quarter to one*

**Plus** and **moins** also feature in many everyday phrases:
**en plus** *extra, in addition*
**au moins** *at least*
**x fois plus grand** *x times bigger*
**moi non plus** *me neither*
**plus ou moins** *more or less*
**de plus** *furthermore*
**(une heure) de plus** *(one hour) more*
**(une heure) au plus** *(an hour) at the most*
**de plus en plus (difficile)** *more and more (difficult)*
**plus ... plus ...** *the more ... the more ...*
**Plus ça change ... plus c'est la même chose.** *The more things change ... the more they stay the same.*

## comparisons: plus, moins

- When making comparisons, **plus** *more* and **moins** *less* are the key words; this corresponds to English in certain cases, but there's no equivalent of the English *-er* ending, as in *faster, cheaper, nicer* or *bigger*.
  **Cette méthode est plus facile.** *This method is easier.* lit. *more easy*
  **Voulez-vous perdre du poids plus facilement?** *Do you want to lose weight more easily?*
  **Il y a un train plus lent.** *There's a slower train.*
  **Ce train va plus lentement.** *This train is going more slowly.*

- *Than* is **que**:
  **Anna est plus sportive que Stéphanie.** *Anna is more sporty than Stephanie.*
  **Glasgow est moins cher que Paris.** *Glasgow is less expensive (cheaper) than Paris.*
  **Ils sont plus riches que nous.** *They are richer than us.*
  **Il pleut moins souvent que l'année dernière.** *It rains less often than last year.*

## superlatives: le plus, le moins

- To say *the most/least ...* you use **le/la/les** + **plus/moins**. There's no equivalent of the English *-est* as in *fastest, cheapest* or *biggest.*
  **Ce livre est le plus intéressant.** *This book is the most interesting.*
  **C'est la chambre la moins chère.** *It's the least expensive room.*
  **Les films français sont les plus intéressants.** *French films are the most interesting.*
  **Rachel parle français le moins couramment.** *Rachel speaks French the least fluently.*
  **Robert parle le plus vite.** *Robert speaks the most quickly.*

- If the adjective is one that comes before the noun (page 58), it comes before the noun in the superlative too:
  **la plus belle ville** *the most beautiful town*

- *In* after a superlative is **de**:
  **le plus petit portable du monde** *the smallest laptop in the world*
  **le politicien le plus populaire de la France** *the most popular politician in France*

## irregular comparatives and superlatives

- As in English, the adjective **bon** *good* and the adverb **bien** *well* have irregular comparatives and superlatives, *better* and *best*. Beware of translating *better* and *best*, as in English they can be both an adjective and an adverb, but in French the words are not interchangeable:
  **bon** *good* **meilleur** *better* (adj) **le meilleur** *the best* (adj)
  **bien** *well* **mieux** *better* (adv) **le mieux** *the best* (adv)
  **la meilleure équipe de la ligue** *the best team in the league*
  **l'équipe qui joue le mieux** *the team that plays the best*

- The adverbs **peu** *little* and **beaucoup** *a lot* also have an irregular comparative and superlative:
  **peu** *little* **moins** *less* **le moins** *the least*
  **beaucoup** *a lot* **plus** *more* **le plus** *the most*
  **Mathilde parle peu en classe, Océane parle plus mais Ilona parle le plus.** *Mathilde speaks little in class, Océane speaks more but Ilona speaks the most.*

- The adjective **mauvais** *bad* and the adverb **mal** *badly* have both a regular form and an irregular form (**pire**) in the comparative and superlative:
  **mauvais** *bad* **plus mauvais/pire** *worse* (adj)
  **le plus mauvais/le pire** *worst* (adj)
  **mal** *badly* **plus mal/pire** *worse* (adv)
  **le plus mal/le pire** *worst* (adv)
  Once again, be careful when translating *worse* and *worst*, as in English they are both adjective and adverb, while in French the adverb and adjective have different forms when they are regular.
  **les plus mauvais films du vingtième siècle/les pires films du vingtième siècle** *the worst films of the 20th century*
  **Il chante le plus mal/le pire de tous.** *He sings the worst of all.*

- **Moindre** is a special comparative and superlative form of **petit** meaning *lower, lowest* or *lesser, least:*
  **des produits de moindre qualité** *lower-quality products*
  **la moindre suspicion** *the least suspicion*

### as ... as: aussi ... que

**Montréal est aussi joli que Toronto.** *Montreal is as pretty as Toronto.*
**On mange aussi bien ici que dans un restaurant plus cher.** *You can eat as well here as in a more expensive restaurant.*

# checkpoint 6

**1** What's the masculine singular of the adjective these adverbs come from?

a **absolument** .....
b **simplement** .....
c **constamment** .....
d **récemment** .....
e **vraiment** .....
f **précisément** .....
g **lentement** .....
h **couramment** .....
i **complètement** .....
j **effectivement** .....
k **brillamment** .....
l **doucement** .....

**2** And what's the adverb from these adjectives?

a **autre** .....
b **sérieux** .....
c **scientifique** .....
d **général** .....
e **fréquent** .....
f **malheureux** .....
g **actuel** .....
h **évident** .....
i **franc** .....
j **agressif** .....
k **poli** .....
l **énorme** .....

**3** Find the opposites of these adverbs. They're all in this unit.

a **approximativement**
b **pire**
c **lentement**
d **bien**
e **rarement**
f **doucement**

**4** Fill the gaps by translating the words in brackets.

a **Marianne travaille** ..... . (*harder*)
b **Je pense que ces chaussures sont** ..... . (*better*)
**Elles sont** ..... . (*less expensive*)
c **A mon avis, ce livre est** ..... . (*the most interesting*)
d **Théo est plus âgé** ..... **Florian.** (*than*)
e **Le train de 9h00 est** ..... . (*the slowest*)
f **C'est le** ..... **film que j'ai jamais vu.** (*worst*)
g **Luca joue bien mais Joël joue** ..... . (*better*)
h **Le Sahara est le** ..... **désert** ..... .
(*the largest desert in the world*)
i **Le Havre est** ..... **grand** ..... **Reims.** (*as big as*)

# Demonstratives and possessives

Demonstratives are words like *this*, *that one*, *those*, which you use to point things out.

The English *this* and *that* have two functions. They can be:

- demonstrative adjectives, used with a noun: I'm going to buy **this** house, not **that** bungalow.
- demonstrative pronouns, taking the place of the noun: I'm going to buy **this (one)**, not **that (one)**.

In French there's a different set of words for each of these two grammatical categories. The words in both sets start with **ce** and they all have to agree with the noun they're describing (adjectives) or replacing (pronouns).

When you're talking about possession, the most striking difference between French and English is that there's no French equivalent of *'s*. Instead you have to use **de** *of*: **la maison de Paul** *Paul's house*.

But in both English and French, possessive adjectives and possessive pronouns are separate sets of words:

- adjectives: **mon** *my*, **votre** *your*
- pronouns: **le mien** *mine*, **le vôtre** *yours*

French possessive adjectives and pronouns have to agree with the noun they're describing or replacing.

## demonstrative adjectives

The demonstrative adjectives *this, that, these* and *those* are used with a noun. The French demonstrative adjective **ce** means both *this* and *that*. Like all adjectives in French, it changes its ending to agree with the noun that follows. There are two masculine singular forms, with **cet** being used before a vowel or **h** (in most cases; see page 17).

| | *this/that* | *these/those* |
|---|---|---|
| m | **ce/cet** | **ces** |
| f | **cette** | **ces** |

**ce livre** *this/that book;* **en ce moment** *at this moment*
**cet enfant** *this/that child;* **cet homme** *this/that man*
**cette femme** *this/that woman;* **cette semaine** *this week*

**un de ces livres** *one of these/those books*
**J'aime bien ces chaussures.** *I like these shoes very much.*

You repeat a demonstrative adjective before each noun in a list:
**ces hommes et ces femmes** *these/those men and (these/those) women*

As in English, you can also use **ce, cet, cette** and **ces** before adjectives and numbers:
**ce grand chien** *this/that big dog*
**cet ancien château** *this/that former palace*
**cette ancienne église** *this/that former church*
**ces chaussures vertes** *these/those green shoes*
**ces deux femmes** *these/those two women*

If you want to highlight the difference between something that's nearby and something that's further away, you can tag **-ci** *this* or **-là** *that* to the noun:
**ce livre-ci** *this book*
**en ce moment-là** *at that moment*

**Cet enfant-ci est plus sage que cet enfant-là.** *This child (here) is better behaved than that child (over there).*
**J'aime bien ces chaussures-ci mais je n'aime pas ces bottes-là.** *I like these shoes, but I don't like those boots.*

## demonstrative pronouns

The demonstrative pronouns *this (one)*, *that (one)*, *these* and *those* replace a noun. In French they agree with the noun they replace:

| | *this one/that one* | *these/those* |
|---|---|---|
| m | **celui** | **ceux** |
| f | **celle** | **celles** |

They're often used with a preposition, e.g. **à, de, dans**:
**Mon portable coûte moins cher que celui de Paul.** *My mobile phone costs less than Paul's.*
**Je préfère ces T-shirts-ci que ceux à dix euros.** *I prefer these T-shirts to the ones costing 10 euros.*
**Je pense que les cerises au marché sont plus fraîches que celles dans le supermarché.** *I think that the cherries in the market are fresher than those in the supermarket.*

They're also used with **qui** or **que** *who, which* (page 92):
**Les gens qui connaissent une langue étrangère sont plus intéressants que ceux qui ne parlent qu'anglais.** *People who know a foreign language are more interesting than those who only speak English.*
**Tu aimes ces chemises? Dis-moi celles que tu veux essayer.** *Do you like these shirts? Tell me which ones you want to try on.*

You can add **-ci** for *this (one), these (ones)* or **-là** for *that (one), those (ones)*:
**J'ai lu ce livre-ci, mais je n'ai pas encore lu celui-là.** *I've read this book, but I haven't read that one.*
**J'aime bien ces chaussures-ci, mais je n'aime pas du tout celles-là.** *I like these shoes very much, but I don't like those (ones) at all.*
**Tu préfères quelle robe? Moi, je préfère celle-ci.** *Which dress do you prefer? I prefer this one.*
**Je ne veux pas ces oignons-là; je voudrais ceux-ci.** *I don't want those onions, I want these.*

## cela, ça, ceci, ci, ce

- **Cela** *that*, and its shortened form **ça**, are used very frequently in spoken French to refer to an idea or situation rather than to a specific noun:
  **Cela ne m'étonne pas.** *That doesn't surprise me.*
  **Je n'aime pas ça.** *I don't like it/that.*
  **C'est ça!** *That's right.*
  **Ça te plaît?** *Do you like it?* lit. *Does it to you please?*
  **Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire?** *What does it/that mean?*

- **Ceci** *this* is used far less than **cela/ça**:
  **A cause de ceci j'ai raté le train.** *Because of this, I missed the train.*
  **Et avec ceci?** *Anything else?* This is something you'll hear said in a shop. It literally means *And with this?*

- **Ci** on its own means *this* but only appears in a few idioms:
  **comme ci, comme ça** *so-so*

- **Ce** on its own means *this*, *that* or *it* and is usually used with **être** *to be*. **Ce** is shortened to **c'** before a vowel: **c'est, c'était.**

  When the noun following **ce** is plural, then the verb is plural too:
  **Ce sont mes collègues.** *These are my colleagues.*
  **C'étaient elles.** *It was them* (f).

  **Ce** can also go before **qui** or **que** (page 92).

**C'est** has a number of uses, including:

- defining or identifying things and people:
  **Qu'est-ce que c'est? C'est un ordinateur.** *What is it? It's a computer.*
  **C'est qui? C'est ma femme.** *Who is it? She's my wife.*
  **C'est David.** *It's David.* **C'est moi.** *It's me.*
- expressing a view:
  **C'est vrai.** *That's true.*
  **Ce n'est pas grave.** *It doesn't matter.* lit. *It's not serious.*

## c'est or il est?

As a general rule of thumb:

- with an adjective, you use **il/elle est** to describe a person and **c'est** to describe a situation:
  **Il est tres gentil.** *He's very kind.* **C'est bizarre.** *It's strange.*
- with an adverb, you use **il est** if it's unmodified, i.e. has no extra information added to it, and **c'est** if it is modified:
  **Il est tard.** *It's late.* **C'est tres tard.** *It's very late.*
- with a noun, you use **il/elle est** if it's unmodified and **c'est** if it is modified: **Elle est chanteuse.** *She's a singer.* **C'est une bonne chanteuse.** *She's a good singer.*
- in impersonal phrases where *it* doesn't refer back to something already mentioned, you use **il est**; when *it* refers back to something that has already been identified, use **c'est**. **Il est** is followed by **de** and **c'est** by **à**:
  **Il est difficile de savoir que faire.** *It's hard to know what to do.*
  **La casse-tête? C'était facile à faire.** *The brain-teaser? It was easy to do.*

# checkpoint 7

**1** Match up the noun with **ce**, **cet**, **cette** or **ces**.

| | |
|---|---|
| a ..... **église** | b ..... **gens** |
| c ..... **hôtel** | d ..... **ville** |
| e ..... **restaurant** | f ..... **arbre** |
| g ..... **personne** | h ..... **choses** |
| i ..... **ancien bâtiment** | j ..... **ancienne église** |
| k ..... **vêtements** | l ..... **haut bâtiment** |

**2** Place the correct form of **celui** in the gap to mean *the one(s)* or *this/that/those one(s)*:

a **Quelle maison?** ..... **au coin de la rue.**
b **Quels livres?** ..... **qui sont sur la table.**
c **Quel appartement?** ..... **au deuxième étage.**
d **Quelles chaussures?** ..... **à 60 euros.**
e **Quel bâtiment?** ..... **que nous avons vu hier.**
f **Tu préfères quel portable? Moi, je préfère** ..... **-ci.**
g **Tu préfères quelles lunettes? Moi, je préfère** ..... **-là.**

## possessive adjectives

- There's no French equivalent of the English apostrophe -s ('s) as in *Paul's house* or *the company's address*. Neither is there the equivalent of two nouns together as in *company address* or *telephone number*. Instead, you always say *the house of Paul*; *the address of the company*. *Of* is **de**, changing to **du**, **des**, etc. (page 48) when followed by *the*:
  **la maison de Paul** *Paul's house*; **l'adresse de la société** *the company's address*; **le numéro de téléphone** *the phone number*.

- Possessive adjectives, which are used with a noun, are:

| | *my* | *your* | *his/her/its* | *our* | *your* | *their* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| m | **mon** | **ton** | **son** | **notre** | **votre** | **leur** |
| f | **ma** | **ta** | **sa** | **notre** | **votre** | **leur** |
| pl | **mes** | **tes** | **ses** | **nos** | **vos** | **leurs** |

  The possessive adjective that goes with **on** is **notre/nos**:
  **On a perdu notre chien.** *We've lost our dog.*

- Possessive adjectives agree with what's owned, not with the owner. *My house* is **ma maison**, regardless of whether it's a man or woman talking: **notre enfant** *our child*; **nos enfants** *our children*; **leurs enfants** *their children*; **un de mes amis** *one of my friends*; **une de tes amies** *one of your girlfriends*
  It's particularly important to bear this in mind with **son/sa/ses**, which can mean *his* or *her*:
  **son épouse** *his/her spouse*; **sa sœur** *his/her sister*
  **Robert a nettoyé sa voiture.** *Robert has cleaned his car.*
  **Camilla a nettoyé sa voiture.** *Camilla has cleaned her car.*

- **Mon**, **ton** and **son** are used with feminine nouns when the following word begins with a vowel or before most words beginning with **h**:
  **mon amie** *my girlfriend*; **ton adresse** *your address*; **son autre sœur** *his/her other sister*

- You use the definite article, not the possessive adjective, with parts of the body when it's clear who the owner is:
  **Les enfants se brossent les dents.** *The children are brushing their teeth.*

## possessive pronouns

Possessive pronouns, i.e. *mine, yours, theirs,* etc. are used without a noun, but they agree with the noun they stand for.

| | *mine* | *yours* (**tu**) | *his/hers/its* |
|---|---|---|---|
| m sing | **le mien** | **le tien** | **le sien** |
| f sing | **la mienne** | **la tienne** | **la sienne** |
| m pl | **les miens** | **les tiens** | **les siens** |
| f pl | **les miennes** | **les tiennes** | **les siennes** |

| | *ours* | *yours* (**vous**) | *theirs* |
|---|---|---|---|
| m sing | **le nôtre** | **le vôtre** | **le leur** |
| f sing | **la nôtre** | **la vôtre** | **la leur** |
| m pl | **les nôtres** | **les vôtres** | **les leurs** |
| f pl | **les nôtres** | **les vôtres** | **les leurs** |

**La mienne est ici.** *Mine is here.* (referring to something feminine)
**Les passeports? Voici le mien. Où est le tien?** *The passports? Here's mine. Where's yours?*
**Et les billets? Les nôtres sont avec les leurs.** *And the tickets? Ours are with theirs.*

The **le** and **les** of the possessive pronouns follow the usual rules when following **à** or **de**, becoming **au, aux, du, des** (page 48):
**Leurs coutumes sont plutôt différentes des vôtres.** *Their customs are rather different from yours.*
**En général je n'ai pas peur des chiens, mais j'ai peur du sien.** *Usually I'm not afraid of dogs, but I'm afraid of his/hers.*
**Je préfère tes chaussures aux miennes.** *I prefer your shoes to mine.*

## à moi, à toi

You can also say who something belongs to with **être** + **à** + noun or emphatic pronoun (**moi, toi, lui, elle, nous, vous, eux, elles** page 87):
**À qui est ce manteau?** *Whose is this coat?*
**C'est à Valérie.** *It's Valérie's.*
**C'est à moi = C'est le mien.** *It's mine.*
**Les bagages sont à eux.** *The luggage is theirs.*

# checkpoint 8

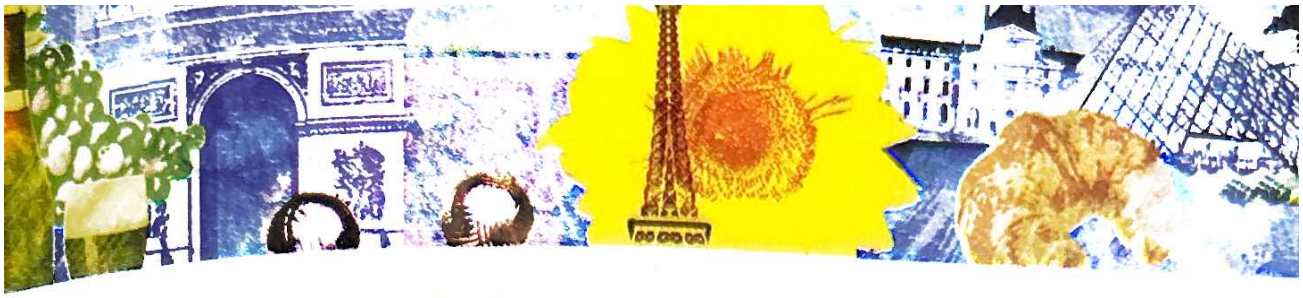
1 Underline the correct possessive adjective:

a **Il a expliqué [son, sa, ses] idée.**
b **[leur, leurs] chef est très sympa.**
c **Où sont [votre, vos] enfants?**
d **Nous avons oublié [notre, nos] appareil photo.**
e **Où se trouve [ton, ta, tes] sac?**
f **Quel est [votre, vos] film préféré?**
g **[leur, leurs] enfants sont étudiants.**
h **[mon, ma, mes] amie va arriver ce soir.**
i **On a visité [notre, nos] parents.**
j **[mon, ma, mes] parents habitent en Ecosse.**

2 Answer the question using the possessive pronoun in the brackets:

a **A qui est ce livre? C'est** ..... (*mine*)
b **A qui sont ces chaussures? Ce sont** ..... (*his*)
c **A qui est cette voiture? C'est** ..... (*hers*)
d **A qui sont ces bagages? Ce sont** ..... (*ours*)
e **A qui sont ces jouets? Ce sont** ..... (*yours*, **tu** form)
f **A qui est ce vélo? C'est** ..... (*yours*, **vous** form)
g **A qui est ce portable? C'est** ..... (*hers*)
h **A qui est ce chien? C'est** ..... (*theirs*)

There may be lots of rules in French grammar but there are patterns to them, and learning one rule helps when you come across a new grammar point.
You can see, for example, that the endings of the demonstrative pronouns **celui** (masculine singular), **ceux** (masculine plural), **celle** (feminine singular) and **celles** (feminine plural) are identical to the stressed pronouns **lui** (masculine singular), **eux** (masculine plural), **elle** (feminine singular) and **elles** (feminine plural).



# Pronouns

Pronouns are words like *I*, *she*, *we*, *us*, *him*, *them*, *your*, *mine* and *those*, which you use to save repeating a noun:
**The plumber** called – **he**'s going to be late.
Have you seen **the children**? I can't find **them**.
Where's **my key**? I've lost **it**.

Personal pronouns can be:

- the subject of a verb: *I*, *we*, *you*, *he*, *she*, *they*
- the direct object of a verb: *me*, *us*, *you*, *him*, *her*, *them*
- the indirect object of a verb: *(to/for) me, (to/for) us, (to/for) you, (to/for) him, (to/for) her, (to/for) them*. French has single words for these.

Subject pronouns are used in a similar way in English and French.

Object pronouns usually go before the verb in French, as in the phrase **s'il vous plaît** *please*, literally *if it pleases you*. When there's more than one object pronoun, there's a strict word-order pattern that they must follow.

For demonstrative pronouns (e.g. *this one, those*) see page 71, for possessive pronouns (e.g. *mine, yours*) see page 75, and for the interrogative pronouns (e.g. *which one?*) see page 125.

## subject pronouns

| | |
|---|---|
| **je** (j' before a vowel) *I* | **nous** *we* |
| **tu** *you* | **vous** *you* |
| **il** *he, it* | **ils** *they* (m) |
| **elle** *she, it* | **elles** *they* (f) |
| **on** *one, we, you, they* | |

- Unlike *I* in English, **je** isn't written with a capital letter, except when it starts a sentence.
- The English *it* is **il** or **elle**, depending on the gender of the noun it refers to. **Où est la voiture? Elle est ici.** *Where's the car? It's here.* In impersonal expressions (i.e. when not referring to a particular noun) it is **il**: **Il pleut.** *It's raining.*
- The English *they* is **ils** or **elles**, depending on the gender of the noun *they* refers to. **Elles sont jolies, tes chaussures.** *Your shoes are lovely* (**chaussures** are feminine). **Ils** is used for a mixed group, even if there's just one male in a big group.
- There are two words for *you*, each using a different verb ending:
  **tu**: a friend, a family member or a child; young people usually call one another **tu** from the start.
  **vous**: a person you don't know well or who is older than you. If in doubt, use **vous** rather than **tu**. **Vous** is also the plural of **tu** and is used when talking to more than one person, whether they're friends or strangers.
- When the subject of a verb is nobody in particular, *on* is often used. It can mean *we*, *you*, *they* or *one*.
  **On ne peut pas stationner ici.** *You can't park here.*
  **Ici on parle anglais.** *English is spoken here.* lit. *Here we speak English.*
  **Comment dit-on ça en français?** *How do you say that in French?*
  **On ne sait jamais.** *You never know.*
  **On dit que c'est un bon film.** *They say it's a good film.*
- The verb with **on** has the same ending as with *he/she*.
- **On** is often used in informal spoken French instead of **nous**.
  **On vient de rentrer.** *We've just come back.*
  **Où est-ce qu'on va ce soir?** *Where shall we go this evening?*
  **On se rencontre ce soir?** *Shall we meet this evening?*

- The possessive adjectives (page 74) used with **on** are **notre** or **nos** *our*:
  **Où est-ce qu'on peut laisser nos bagages?** *Where can we leave our luggage?*
  **On voudrait louer notre maison.** *We'd like to let our house.*

- Although the endings of verbs are the same as for *he/she*, adjectives and past participles (page 154) that follow **on** have a plural ending – masculine or feminine, as appropriate:
  **On est prêts.** *We're ready.* (group of men, or mixed group)
  **On est prêtes.** *We're ready.* (group of women)
  **On est arrivés hier./On est arrivées hier.** *We arrived yesterday.*

## object pronouns

Object pronouns (*me, us, you, him, her, it, them*) can either be:

- the direct object of a verb: *Anne knows me, the children saw him, I've invited them*
- or the indirect object of a verb: *Anne writes to me, the children listened to him; I've made a cake for them*

In French, there's no distinction made between these four direct and indirect object pronouns:

| | |
|---|---|
| **me (m')** *me, to/for me* | **te (t')** *you, to/for you* **(tu)** |
| **nous** *us, to/for us* | **vous** *you, to/for you* |

**Anne me/nous connaît.** *Anne knows me/us.*
**Anne m'/nous écrit.** *Anne writes to me/to us.*

However, the pronouns *him, her, it, them* are entirely different words from *to/for him, to/for her, to/for them.*

| **direct** | **indirect** |
|---|---|
| **le (l')** *him, it* (m) | **lui** *to/for him* |
| **la (l')** *her, it* (f) | **lui** *to/for her* |
| **les** *them* (m and f) | **leur** *to/for them* (m and f) |

**Anne le/la connaît.** *Anne knows him/her.*
**Anne lui écrit.** *Anne writes to him/to her.*
**Je les ai invité(e)s.** *I've invited them.*
**Je leur ai fait un gâteau.** *I've made a cake for them.*

**Me, te, le** and **la** usually shorten to **m', t'** and **l'** before a vowel:
**Je t'aime.** *I love you;* **Nous l'adorons.** *We adore him/her/it.*

## direct or indirect object?

In general, the same verbs take a direct or indirect object in English and French. However, there are some to look out for.

- With some verbs it's not immediately obvious that the object is indirect because there are two ways of using them in English – with or without a preposition before the pronoun:
  **Je lui ai donné de l'argent.** *I gave him some money./I gave some money to him.*
  **Je lui ai acheté une glace.** *I bought an ice cream for her./I bought her an ice cream.*
  **Je vais leur envoyer les photos.** *I'm going to send them the photos./I'm going to send the photos to them.*

- Unlike English, the following have an indirect object in French:

| | |
|---|---|
| **convenir** *to suit* | **dire** *to say, tell* |
| **demander** *to ask* | **faire mal** *to hurt* |
| **faire confiance** *to trust* | **obéir** *to obey* |
| **plaire** *to please* | **resister** *to resist* |
| **ressembler** *to resemble* | **téléphoner** *to phone* |

  These verbs all need **à** before a noun.
  **Je ne veux pas téléphoner à ma mère.** *I don't want to phone my mother.*
  **Je ne veux pas lui téléphoner.** *I don't want to phone her.*
  **Tu vas demander à tes professeurs?** *Are you going to ask your teachers?*
  **Tu vas leur demander?** *Are you going to ask them?*

- In English, these verbs are followed by a preposition before a noun whereas in French they have a direct object:

| | |
|---|---|
| **attendre** *to wait for* | **chercher** *to look for* |
| **demander** *to ask for* | **écouter** *to listen to* |
| **payer** *to pay for* | **regarder** *to look at* |

  **J'aime écouter la musique de Bizet.** *I like to listen to Bizet's music.*
  **On attend l'autobus.** *We're waiting for the bus.*
  **On l'attend.** *We're waiting for it.*

## y

Y is a pronoun meaning *there* (or *here*, depending on the context). Like other pronouns, it comes before the verb.

- Y replaces a phrase referring to a place.
  **Vous habitez à Paris? Oui, j'y habite depuis dix ans.** *Do you live in Paris? Yes, I've been living there/here for ten years.*
  **Vous connaissez l'Ecosse? Oui, j'y suis allé l'année dernière.** *Do you know Scotland? Yes, I went there last year.*
  **On s'amuse très bien chez elle. Oui, c'est vrai, on s'y amuse très bien.** *We have a good time at her house. Yes, that's true, we have a very good time there.*

- Y is the pronoun used with verbs that are followed by **à**, such as **répondre à** *to reply to*, **penser à** *to think about* (page 196), when you're talking about ***something*** rather than ***someone***. It can't be left out in French:
  **Tu as répondu à sa lettre? Oui, j'y ai répondu hier.** *Have you replied to his letter? Yes, I replied to it yesterday.*
  **Il y pense tout le temps.** *He thinks about it all the time.*

- Y is often used after **aller** when no specific place is referred to:
  **On y va?** *Shall we go?*
  **Allons-y!** *Let's go, off we go!*
  **Vas-y!** *Go ahead!*

Y appears in the following phrases:
**il y a** *there is/there are; ago*
**Ça y est!** *That's it!*
**Nous y voilà./On y est.** *Here we are.*
**y compris** *including*
**le Royaume-Uni, y compris les îles Anglo-Normandes et l'île de Man** *the UK including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man*
**Il faut y réfléchir.** *We'll have to give it some thought.*

## en

**En** is a pronoun which replaces nouns accompanied by **du, de la, de l'** and **des**. Like other pronouns it comes before the verb.

- **En** translates *of it/them, with it/them* etc. when used with verbs and adjectives that are followed by **de**, such as **avoir besoin de** *to need*, **se souvenir de** *to remember*, **ravi de** *delighted with*. It cannot be omitted in French:
  **Je n'en ai pas besoin.** *I don't need it/them.*
  **Tu t'en souviens?** *Do you remember (it)?*
  **J'en ai marre.** *I'm fed up (with it).*
  **J'en suis sûr/certain.** *I'm sure/certain (of it).*
  **Elle en est fière.** *She's proud of it.*
  **Ils n'en sont pas capables.** *They're not capable of it.*
  **Nous en sommes ravis.** *We're delighted (with it/them).*

> **En** isn't used to replace a person. You use an emphatic pronoun (page 87) instead:
> **Elle est fière de lui.** *She's proud of him.*
> **Je me souviens de lui.** *I remember him.*

- **En** corresponds to *of it, of them* in phrases involving quantity and numbers:
  **Vous en voulez combien?** *How much/many (of it/them) do you want?*
  **J'en prends deux kilos.** *I'll take two kilos (of them).*
  **Des enfants? J'en ai trois.** *Children? I've got three (of them).*
  **Il y a combien de banques dans cette ville? Il y en a beaucoup.** *How many banks are there in this town? There are a lot.*
  **Et combien de cinémas? Il y en a un.** *And how many cinemas? (There's) one.*
  **Encore du vin? Non merci, j'en ai eu assez.** *More wine? No thank you, I've had enough.*

- **En** can also replace a place in a phrase beginning with **de** *from*:
  **Votre mari est rentré des Etats-Unis? Oui, il en est rentré hier soir.** *Has your husband come back from the United States? Yes, he came back (from there) last night.*
  **Vous êtes allé au travail? Oui, j'en viens.** *Have you been to work? Yes, I've just come from there.*

- **En** means *some* or *any*:
  **J'en ai./Je n'en ai pas.** *I've got some./I haven't got any.*
  **Tu en veux?** *Do you want some?*
  **Tu voudrais en avoir?** *Would you like to have some?*

- **En** is an integral part of the verbs **s'en aller** *to go away* and **s'en faire** *to worry*:
  **Va-t-en!/Allez-vous-en!** *Go away!*
  **Je m'en vais.** *I'm going (away)./I'm off.*
  **Ne t'en fais pas./Ne vous en faites pas.** *Don't worry.*

## checkpoint 9

Fill the gaps with **y** or **en**.

1 Comment allez vous au travail? J'..... vais par le train.
2 Vous connaissez le restaurant Chez Nico? Oui, on ..... dîne souvent.
3 Vous avez des sœurs? Oui, j'..... ai une.
4 On est prêts? Allons-.....
5 Tu peux me donner de l'argent? Non, je ne peux pas t'..... donner.
6 Quel est son nom? Je ne m'..... souviens pas.
7 Tu as lu son dernier roman? J'..... ai lu quelques pages.
8 Tu sais que c'est mon anniversaire demain? Oui, j'..... pensais ce matin.
9 Le train arrivera à Waterloo à quelle heure? Il ..... arrivera à 14h56.
10 Vous connaissez les frères de Martin? J'..... connais un.

## position of object pronouns

- All object pronouns (direct, indirect, **y** and **en**) generally go before a verb:
  **Vous me comprenez?** *Do you understand me?*
  **Je te crois.** *I believe you.*
  **J'y vais demain.** *I'm going there tomorrow.*
  **Je ne les connais pas.** *I don't know them.*

- When there are two verbs, the object pronoun comes before the verb it belongs to:
  **Je vais lui téléphoner demain.** *I'm going to phone him tomorrow.* (i.e. *him* goes with *phone*, it's *phone him*, not *go him*)
  **Tu peux m'écrire.** *You can write to me.*
  **Je veux y passer deux jours.** *I want to spend two days there.*

- When there's more than one object pronoun belonging to the same verb, they appear in the following order (except in positive imperatives – see opposite):

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| me | le | lui | y | en |
| te | la | leur | | |
| nous | les | | | |
| vous | | | | |

**Je vous la passe maintenant.** *I'll transfer you to her now.*
**Je vais le lui envoyer demain.** *I'll send it to him/her tomorrow.*
**Je leur y en ai donné.** *I gave them some there.*

When **le** and **les** are object pronouns and not articles (page 48) they don't combine with **à** or **de** to become **au**, **aux**, **du** or **des**:
**Je lui ai demandé de le faire tout de suite.** *I asked him/her to do it immediately.*
**Il a réussi à les voir.** *He succeeded in seeing them.*

## object pronouns and the imperative

- When you're telling somebody ***not to*** do something (page 171), the order of pronouns is the same as in ordinary sentences:
  **Ne me les donnez pas.** *Don't give them to me.*
  **Ne la lui envoyez pas.** *Don't send it* (f) *to her.*

- But when you're telling somebody ***to*** do something (page 170), object pronouns come after the verb and are joined to it with a hyphen. **Me** changes to **moi** or **m'** if followed by **y** or **en**. The order of pronouns is:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| le | lui | moi | y | en |
| la | leur | nous | | |
| les | | | | |

**Prends-le.** *Take it.* **Apportez-le-leur.** *Bring it to them.*
**Laissez-nous en paix.** *Leave us in peace.*
**Donnez-les-moi.** *Give them to me.*
**Donnez-m'en.** *Give me some.* This is quite formal, and you'll also hear **Donnez-en-moi** in everyday speech.

## object pronouns and the past tense

In the past tense, object pronouns go before the auxiliary verb **avoir/être** (pages 158,159). For verbs taking **avoir**, the past participle has to agree with the noun represented by the direct pronoun, but there's no agreement necessary with indirect pronouns or with **y** and **en**. These agreement endings only make a difference to pronunciation in the few past participles that end in a consonant e.g. **fait** *done*, **écrit** *written*, **mis** *put*.
**Où est la voiture? Je l'ai laissée sur le parking près de la cathédrale.**
*Where's the car? I've left it in the car park near the cathedral.*
**Les billets! Il les a oubliés.** *The tickets! He's forgotten them.*
**Les lettres? Je les ai mises à la poste.** *The letters? I've posted them.*
(The middle **s** of **mises** is pronounced.)
**On nous a invités à une soirée.** *We've been invited to a party.*

There's no agreement with indirect object pronouns:
**On nous a téléphoné hier.** *They phoned us yesterday.*
**Vous leur avez écrit?** *Have you written/did you write to them?*

## reflexive pronouns

| subject | reflexive |
|---|---|
| **je** | **me (m')** *myself* |
| **tu** | **te (t')** *yourself* |
| **il/elle** | **se (s')** *himself, herself, itself* |
| **nous** | **nous** *ourselves* |
| **vous** | **vous** *yourselves* |
| **ils/elles** | **se (s')** *themselves* |

- These pronouns are an integral part of reflexive verbs (page 116), and as such are generally not translated into English:
  **Elle se maquille.** *She's putting on (her) make-up.*
  **Nous nous sommes biens amusés.** *We had a good time.*
  **Vous vous êtes mariés quand?** *When did you get married?*
  **Je ne me souviens pas.** *I don't remember.*

- The reflexive pronoun that goes with **on** is **se**:
  **On s'amuse bien.** *We're having a good time.*
  **On se retrouvera bientôt.** *We'll meet up again soon.*

- **Nous, vous** and **se** or **s'** (plural) can mean *each other* or *one another*:
  **Nous nous comprenons.** *We understand each other.*
  **Vous vous connaissez depuis longtemps?** *Have you known each other long?*
  **Ils s'aiment.** *They love each other.*

- **Te** becomes **toi** in positive imperatives, except when followed by **en** (page 171). All other reflexive pronouns stay the same:
  **Dépêchez-vous!** *Hurry up!*
  **Lève-toi!** *Get up!*

If you want to say *myself, yourself* etc, you can use the emphatic pronouns (see next page) attached to **-même(s)**: **moi-même** *myself*, **toi-même** *yourself*, **eux-mêmes** *themselves*.
**Je l'ai fait moi-même.** *I did it myself.*
**Ils l'ont vu eux-mêmes.** *They saw it themselves.*

## emphatic pronouns

These emphatic (or stressed) pronouns have a variety of uses in French.

| | |
|---|---|
| **moi** *I, me* | **nous** *we, us* |
| **toi** *you* | **vous** *you* |
| **lui** *he, him* | **eux** *they, them* (m) |
| **elle** *she, her* | **elles** *they, them* (f) |

- One of their uses is to add emphasis to the subject pronoun:
  **Moi, je sais.** *I know.*
  **Toi, tu peux venir.** *You can come.*
  **Lui, il a dix-sept ans, et elle, elle a dix-neuf ans.** *He's 17 and she's 19.*
  **Eux, ils ont raison.** *They're right.*

- They can also go at the end of the sentence:
  **Je ne sais pas, moi.** *I don't know.*
  **On est américains, nous.** *We're American.*

- They are used after prepositions:
  **Je vais avec eux.** *I'm going with them.*
  **Grâce à lui, je suis contente.** *Thanks to him, I'm happy.*
  **C'est pour toi.** *It's for you.*

- They are used after **être** *to be*:
  **C'est moi.** *It's me.*
  **C'était qui? C'étaient eux.** *Who was it? It was them.*

- They can stand alone without a verb:
  **Qui veut le faire? Pas moi!** *Who wants to do it? Not me!*
  **Toi aussi?** *You too?*

> **Nous** is the emphatic pronoun used with **on**:
> **Nous, on va rester à la maison.** *We're going to stay at home.*

# checkpoint 10

1 How would you say *Hello, it's me* in French?

2 Would you use **tu** or **vous** for these people?

**a** a six-year-old child

**b** an elderly neighbour

**c** the person on the hotel reception desk

**d** two friends

3 Match the underlined pronoun in these sentences with the noun or phrase it replaces. There's one extra phrase.

a **Vous lui avez téléphoné?**

b **Je les ai déjà faits.**

c **Il m'en a donné.**

d **On y va.**

e **Je les ai finies.**

i **les questions**

ii **à Paris**

iii **votre ami**

iv **du chocolat**

v **les devoirs**

vi **à votre mari**

4 Fill the gap with the correct object pronoun.

a **Tu ..... connais?** *him*

b **Tu ..... crois?** *me*

c **Je ..... ai parlé.** *to them*

d **Vous ..... avez écrit?** *it*

e **Il va ..... inviter.** *us*

f **On ..... a demandé.** *(to) her*

g **Je ..... aime.** *them*

h **On ..... a dit.** *(to) us*

5 Replace **le concert** and **les billets** with *it* and *them*.

**Vous voulez écouter le concert? Il faut acheter les billets.**

6 Translate these into French. If you need to check up on prepositions, they're on pages 97-107.

**a** *with them* (f)

**b** *for me*

**c** *without them* (m)

**d** *except you* (to a friend)

**e** *after us*

**f** *at his place*

7 What do you think **Elles se connaissent** means?

8 To emphasise that you've made something yourself, what could you add to **Je l'ai fait?**

9 Which of these sentences means *I've already asked them?*

a **Je lui ai déjà demandé.**

b **Je les ai déjà demandés.**

c **Je leur ai déjà demandé.**

10 Talking about a masculine noun, how would you say *He gave it to us?*

# Sentence structure

The more French you learn, the more you'll progress from simple, short phrases to longer sentences which express your needs and opinions in more detail. The two main things to consider when constructing more complex sentences are word order and how to join together the various parts of the sentence.

- Word order is broadly similar in English and French although there are some fundamental differences, such as the position of adjectives after nouns, the position of pronouns (e.g. *us*, *him*, *them*) before verbs and the variety of ways you can ask a question in French.

- To join together the various elements of what you want to say, you can use conjunctions – words like *and*, *but*, *since*, *so*, *however*. You also need words that save you having to repeat nouns or phrases when you're giving additional information about them: words like **qui** and **que** *who*, *which*, **dont** *whose*, and **lequel** *which*.

Progressing isn't simply about more and more grammatical rules. If you listen to native speakers of any language, you'll find that they use words like *well then*, *let's see*, *anyway*, *furthermore*, which bring a sense of continuity to what they say and take it beyond the strictly functional. When you learn a new language, it's an effort at first to remember to use these words as well as everything else – but when you get used to them, you'll find not only that they make you sound more fluent, but also that they give you useful thinking time when you're stuck for a word.

## word order

English and French word order is broadly similar – but there are some differences between the two languages.

- When a noun and an adjective are used together, the noun often comes first in French, whereas in English the adjective practically always comes first: **une décision importante** *an important decision.* Interestingly, French has the flexibility to change the position of the adjective for emphasis: **une importante décision** *a (truly) important decision.* (see page 58)

- To ask a yes/no question, English brings in words like *do/does* or reverses the order of the subject and verb. *Do you work here? Is she ill?* French either puts **Est-ce que** at the beginning of a statement or makes it sound like a question. **Est-ce que vous travaillez ici?/Vous travaillez ici?** *Do you work here?*

  A question word is sometimes found at the end of a French question: **Vous travaillez où?** *Where do you work?* (lit. *You work where?*). French can also reverse the order of subject and verb: **Où travaillez-vous?** but this option is usually kept for short, simple questions. (see pages 122-123)

- When the object of a verb is a pronoun (*me, us, you, him, her, it, them*) it generally goes in front of the verb in French and after it in English:
  **Elle me téléphone tous les jours.** *She phones me every day.*
  **Je l'ai laissé dans le train.** *I left it on the train.*

- Adverbs go after the verb in French:
  **Je vais souvent au cinéma.** *I often go to the cinema.*

- In English you make a verb negative with *not*, while in French you put the words **ne** and **pas** round the verb:
  **Nous ne sommes pas touristes.** *We are not tourists.*
  **Je n'habite pas à Londres.** *I don't live in London.*

- When two nouns are linked together, they're in the opposite order in French to that in English: **la maison de mon oncle** *my uncle's house*; **une tasse à thé** *a teacup*; **mon numéro de téléphone** *my phone number*; **un pull en laine** *a woollen pullover.*

# joining parts of a sentence

The words on this page will help you join together the various elements of what you say, and bring logic and continuity to your sentences.

- Draw things together with **et** *and*, **aussi** *also*.
- Express reservation with **mais** *but* or one of several words for *however*: **cependant**, **pourtant** or **toutefois**. If you disagree strongly you could say **au contraire** *on the contrary*.
- Introduce alternatives with **ou** *or*, **autrement** *otherwise*, **plutôt** *instead, rather*.
- Contrast two elements with **d'une part** *on the one hand* and **d'autre part** *on the other hand*.
- Show you're about to infer a conclusion with **donc** *so, therefore*.
- Reinforce or clarify what you've said with **c'est-à-dire** *that is, i.e.*, **en fait** *in fact*, **en effet** *indeed*, **par exemple** *for example*.
- Provide detail with **où** *where*, **quand** *when*, **tandis que** *while, whereas*.
- Introduce an explanation with **parce que** or **car*** *because*, **puisque** *since*, **étant donné que** *given that*.
- Show there's a consequence with **alors** *then*, **par conséquent**, **en conséquence** *as a result*.
- Introduce a condition with **si** *if*.
- Introduce further information about something you've just said with **qui** *who, whom, which*; **que** *who, which, that*; or **dont** *whose, of which*.

*In written and formal French, **car** is used, while **parce que** is used in everyday language.

**Or** means *however, yet* – not the English *or*, which is **ou**.
**Effectivement** means *really, indeed* – not *effectively*, which is **efficacement** or **en realité** *in effect*.

# who, whom, which, that

## que

**Que**, which shortens to **qu'** before a vowel and most words beginning with **h**, has several meanings. It can mean *than* (page 66), *what?* (page 124) and it has two other important meanings:

- *that*, which is never left out in French as it often is in English:
  **Je sais que tu es très occupé.** *I know (that) you are very busy.*
  **Il dit qu'il ne peut pas venir.** *He says (that) he can't come.*

- *whom*, *which*, *that*, referring to a person or thing. **Que** can't be omitted here either:
  **l'homme que je connais depuis longtemps** *the man (whom) I've known for a long time*
  **le nouveau manteau que j'ai acheté hier** *the new coat (which) I bought yesterday*
  **C'est la bleue que tu préfères?** *Is it the blue one (that) you prefer?*

## qui

In the above examples **que** is the object of **je connais**, **j'ai acheté** and **tu préfères**. When *who/which* refer to the subject, you use **qui**:
**mon frère qui habite en Suisse** *my brother who lives in Switzerland*
**le bâtiment qui se trouve au coin de la rue** *the building which is on the corner of the street*
**C'est nous qui avons tort.** *We are the ones who are wrong.* lit. *It's we who are wrong.*

## ce qui, ce que

When referring to an idea rather than to a particular noun, *which* is **ce qui** (subject) or **ce que** (object). English often uses *and this*.
**Il dit que c'est impossible, ce qui n'est pas vrai.** *He says it's impossible, which isn't true.*
**Il n'est pas allé, ce qui m'étonne.** *He didn't go, and this surprises me.*
**Ma fille fume, ce que je n'aime pas.** *My daughter smokes, which I don't like.*

**Ce qui** and **ce que** also translate the English *what*:
**Je fais ce que je veux.** *I do what I want.*
**Je ne sais pas ce qu'il a fait.** *I don't know what he has done.*
**Ce qui m'embête, c'est ton attitude.** *What annoys me is your attitude.*

## lequel, laquelle

You can use **qui** after a preposition (pages 97-107) to refer to a person:
**les gens avec qui je travaille** *the people with whom I work*
**ma tante, chez qui je vais habiter** *my aunt, with whom I'm going to live*

But for a thing or an idea, you use the appropriate form of **lequel** *which*:

| | singular | plural |
|---|---|---|
| m | **lequel** | **lesquels** |
| f | **laquelle** | **lesquelles** |

**les outils avec lesquels je travaille** *the tools with which I work*
**la maison derrière laquelle on propose de construire un hypermarché** *the house behind which they're planning to build a hypermarket*

**Parmi** and **entre** are followed by **lesquels** or **lesquelles**, not **qui**, even when referring to people:
**deux copains entre lesquels il faut choisir** *two boyfriends who you must choose between*
**de nombreuses victimes, parmi lesquelles plusieurs enfants** *numerous victims, among whom several children*

**Lequel** and **laquelle** combine with **à** and **de**:

| | |
|---|---|
| **à + lequel → auquel** | **de + lequel → duquel** |
| **à + lesquels → auxquels** | **de + lesquels → desquels** |
| **à + lesquelles → auxquelles** | **de + lesquelles → desquelles** |

**À laquelle** and **de laquelle** don't change.

**le bâtiment en face duquel on propose de construire un hypermarché** *the building opposite which they're planning to build a hypermarket*
**des associations caritatives auxquelles je donne de l'argent** *the charities to which I donate money*

**Quoi** means *what* when no specific preceding noun is being referred to:
**Je ne sais pas quoi préparer pour mes invités.** *I don't know what to cook for my guests.*

## dont

**Dont** stands for **de qui** and means *whose, of whom, of which*. Unlike the English, **dont** always follows the word it refers to. Also unlike English, the word order after **dont** is subject + verb + object:
**la femme dont j'ai acheté la voiture** *the woman whose car I bought;*
**des chambres dont la plupart sont occupées** *bedrooms, most of which are occupied*

**Dont** is used as an alternative to **duquel, de laquelle** etc. (page 93) with verbs which are followed by **de**, e.g. **avoir besoin de** *to need*, **avoir envie de** *to feel like*, **parler de** *to talk about*, **se souvenir de** *to remember* (pages 198-199). Very often it's not translated into English:
**Voici l'argent dont tu as besoin.** *Here's the money you need.*
**Je ne connais pas la femme dont vous parlez.** *I don't know the woman you're talking about.*
**C'est la femme dont je me souviens.** *It's the woman I remember.*

When **dont** doesn't refer to a specific noun, it's preceded by **ce** or **tout ce**, and usually expressed in English as *what*:
**Tu sais très bien ce dont je te parle.** *You know very well what I'm talking to you about.*
**Je mange ce dont j'ai envie.** *I eat what I feel like.*

## où

**Où** refers back to a place, and is often not translated in English:
**Voici la maison où elle est née.** *Here's the house where she was born.*
**les pays d'où viennent nos étudiants** *the countries our students come from*

**où** means *when* after a noun referring to time. Again, it's often not translated in English:
**C'était le jour où tu es arrivé.** *It was the day (when) you arrived.*
**Août est le mois où on part généralement en vacances.** *August is the month (when) we usually go on holiday.*
**C'était le moment où j'ai compris que ...** *That was the moment (when) I understood that ...*

## making conversation flow

Words that help the flow of conversation, such as *well*, are difficult to translate exactly – making it more effective to focus on the context they're used in.

- **Alors** can convey *Well then ..., So ..., Right then ...* at the start of a sentence. Other words used in the same way include **eh bien**, **donc**.
- **Bah** and **ben**, also meaning *well*, suggest a bit of uncertainty or hesitation.
- **Bof** shrugs something off, conveying *I don't care* or *Whatever!*
- **Pourtant** and **néanmoins** mean *however, nevertheless*, indicating that you're about to offer an alternative viewpoint. You could also use **quand-même** or **de toute façon** *anyway*.
- **N'est-ce pas?** *Isn't that so?* (see page 123 for more on this handy expression), **tu sais/vous savez** *you know* and **tu vois/vous voyez** *you see* can be used to reinforce what you're saying and ask for agreement.
- **Dis donc!** expresses surprise, like the English *No!*, *Wow!*, or *You don't say!*

## opinions

When giving your opinion, you can start with **moi, je pense que** *I think* or **à mon avis** *in my opinion*. To strengthen your argument you can use **bien sûr** *of course* or **évidemment** *obviously*. As you get into your stride you can punctuate what you're saying with **d'abord** or **en premier lieu** *first of all*, **en second lieu** *secondly*, and summarise with **en bref** *in short*. And you can show that you're coming to a conclusion with **alors** or **eh bien** *so then* or **enfin** *finally*.

**Et toi, qu'est-ce que tu en penses?/Et vous, qu'est-ce que vous en pensez?** *What do you think about it?* will bring others into the discussion. Or you can ask for someone's opinion by beginning **selon toi/vous** *according to you* or **à ton/votre avis** *in your opinion* instead.

To agree with someone you can say **Je suis d'accord** *I agree* or **Tu as/Vous avez raison** *You're right*, and when you disagree you use **Je ne suis pas d'accord** or, to make it a little less strident, **Je ne suis pas tout à fait d'accord** *I don't quite agree with you*.

# checkpoint 11

1 Which of these would you use:

a to express surprise?
b when asking someone for their opinion?
c if you don't know and don't much care?
d when offering your opinion?
e to say you agree with someone?
Which one is left over and what does it mean?

2 Choose the correct form of **lequel** to fit in the blank.
a **Où est le sac dans ..... j'ai mis mes choses?**
b **C'est la raison pour ..... j'ai acheté un chien.**
c **C'est un outil sans ..... je ne peux pas faire mon travail.**
d **Les associations avec ..... nous travaillons.**
e **Les arbres derrière ..... on construit une maison.**

3 Does **qui**, **que** or **où** belong in the gap in this sentence?
**Le jour ..... j'ai rencontré ma femme.**

4 Fill these gaps with **qui**, **que** or **dont**.
a **Mes amis ..... habitent à Londres.**
b **L'argent ..... je t'ai donné hier.**
c **C'est vous ..... m'avez téléphoné?**
d **Les étudiants ..... les noms sont sur la liste.**
e **La maison ..... la porte est blanche.**
f **Je pense ..... vous avez fait une erreur.**

5 What's the opposite of **d'une part**?

6 **Parce que**, **plutôt**, **car**, **puisque**: which is the odd one out?

# Prepositions

Prepositions are words like *at, in, on, of, with, to, between*:
I'm **at** home.
He's going **to** France, **with** her.
It's **in** the office, **by** the phone.

French prepositions usually have a noun or a pronoun after them; they never go at the end of a sentence or question as they often do in English:
**À qui appartient ce portable?** *Who does this mobile phone belong to?*
lit. *To whom belongs this mobile phone?*
**Vous travaillez pour quelle société?** *Which company do you work for?*
lit. *You work for which company?*

Many French and English prepositions correspond directly, such as:
**après** *after*, **avant** *before*, **avec** *with*, **pendant** *during* and **sauf** *except*.
But this isn't the case for the widely used **à**, **de** and **en**. For example:

- In French **en** is used where English uses *in*, *on* and *by*; **à** can be translated by the English *at*, *to*, *in*, *on* or *with*.
- Certain verbs are always followed by **à** or **de**. They're not translated into English, they're simply part of that verb: **assister à une réunion** *to attend a meeting*; **jouer de la guitare** *to play the guitar*.

It's therefore often more effective to associate a preposition with the way it's used rather than look for a straight translation.

## à

which becomes **au** when followed by **le**, and **aux** when followed by **les**, is used for:

- *to* + a person:
  **J'ai écrit à Vincent.** *I've written to Vincent.*
  **Elle a donné des livres aux étudiants.** *She gave some books to the students.*

- *at, to, in* + a place – except continents, regions and feminine countries, which all use **en** (page 37):
  **à la maison, au lit, à l'école** *at home, in bed, at/in school*
  **à l'ombre, au soleil** *in the shade, in the sun*
  **Il est à l'aéroport.** *He's at the airport.*
  **Elle est allée à la gare.** *She's gone to the station.*
  **Je vais à Grenoble.** *I'm going to Grenoble.*
  **Ils habitent à Bruxelles.** *They live in Brussels.*
  **au Canada, au Maroc, aux Antilles** *in/to Canada, in/to Morocco, in/to the West Indies.*

- *on*:
  **à la télé** *on the TV*, **aux infos/informations** *on the news*
  **à la guitare/batterie** *on the guitar/drums*
  **à grande échelle** *on a large scale;* **à l'heure** *on time*
  **à l'arrivée du chef** *on the boss's arrival*
  **au mur** *on the wall;* **au téléphone** *on the phone*
  **à genoux** *on one's knees*
  **au menu** *on the menu;* **à l'ordre du jour** *on the agenda*
  **au premier/deuxième étage** *on the first/second floor*
  Except when *on* means *on top of/on the surface of,* which is usually **sur** (page 104). Compare *on the ground floor* **au rez-de-chaussée** with *on the floor* which is **sur le plancher** or **par terre.**

- *at, in* + time and occasions:
  **Le train arrive à quelle heure?** *What time does the train arrive?*
  **à midi/minuit** *at 12 noon/midnight*
  **à une heure** *at one o'clock*
  **à dix heures et demie** *at half past ten*
  **à Noël/à Pâques** *at Christmas/at Easter*
  **À demain.** *See you tomorrow.*
  **À l'année prochaine à Paris.** *See you next year in Paris.*

- *a/per* + speed:
  **cent kilomètres à l'heure** *100 kilometres per hour*

- *with* + features or characteristics:
  **l'homme à la barbe blanche** *the man with the white beard*
  **la fille aux yeux bleus** *the girl with blue eyes*
  **la maison aux volets verts** *the house with green shutters*

- when talking about direction, distance and location:
  **la première rue à gauche** *the first street on the left*
  **Mon village est situé à cent kilomètres/deux heures de Paris.**
  *My village is 100 kilometres/two hours from Paris.*
  **Nancy est situé à l'ouest de Strasbourg.** *Nancy is (to the) west of Strasbourg.*

- when describing food flavours and styles of cooking:
  **un sandwich au jambon/à la dinde** *a ham/turkey sandwich*
  **une glace à la vanille/au chocolat** *vanilla/chocolate ice cream*
  **des crêpes au citron** *pancakes with lemon*
  **pommes de terre à la lyonnaise** *potatoes cooked in the Lyonnaise style*
  **poulet à la Kiev** *chicken Kiev;* **pomme au four** *baked apple*

- with prices to show value:
  **un timbre à cinquante cents** *a 50-cent stamp*
  **un appartement à cent mille euros** *a 100,000-euro flat*

- to describe the purpose of an object:
  **une tasse à thé** *teacup* (cf. **une tasse de thé** *a cup of tea*)
  **un sac à dos** *backpack*, **une machine à laver** *washing machine*

- after certain verbs (see page 197 for a list):
  **Les enfants apprennent à lire.** *The children are learning to read.*
  **Il commence à neiger.** *It's starting to snow.*
  **Je n'arrive pas à vendre ma voiture.** *I can't manage to sell my car.*

Some common expressions use **à**:
**à pied** *on foot*; **à point** *medium-rare*; **peu à peu** *little by little*; **avoir mal à** *to hurt*; **C'est à qui?** *Whose is it?* **C'est à moi/à eux.** *It's mine/theirs.*
**Attention au chien!** *Beware of the dog!*

## de

which becomes **du** when followed by **le**, and **des** when followed by **les**

- *of*:
  **un verre de vin** *a glass of wine;* **un kilo de pommes** *a kilo of apples;*
  **une tasse de thé** *a cup of tea*

- *'s*:
  **la maison de nos amis** *our friends' house* lit. *the house of our friends*
  **le frère de Sébastien** *Sebastian's brother*
  **le journal d'aujourd'hui** *today's paper;* **l'arrivée du train** *the train's arrival*

- *from*:
  **de Paris à Bordeaux** *from Paris to Bordeaux*
  **de neuf heures à onze heures** *from nine to 11 o'clock*
  **du lundi au vendredi** *from Monday to Friday*
  **du 17 jusqu'au 27 mai** *from the 17th to 27th of May*
  **Je viens de Londres/du Québec.** *I come from London/Quebec.*
  **C'est loin de la mer.** *It's a long way from the sea.*
  **C'est à quelle distance du centre-ville?** *How far is it from the town centre?*
  **une lettre de mon père** *a letter from my father*

- *by* denoting authorship:
  **les poèmes de Rimbaud** *the poems of Rimbaud*
  **un film de Laurent Cantet** *a film by Laurent Cantet*
  **C'est de qui?** *Who's it by?*

- *by* + amounts:
  **Les impôts ont augmenté de 20%.** *Taxes have risen by 20%.*
  **Les prix ont baissé de moitié.** *Prices have dropped by a half.*

- *some, any* (combines with **le**, **la**, **l'**, **les** except in negative sentences):
  **Je voudrais du vin/de la bière.** *I'd like some wine/beer.*
  **Tu veux des légumes?** *Do you want any vegetables?*
  **Nous n'avons pas d'enfants.** *We haven't got any children.*
  **Il n'a plus d'argent.** *He hasn't got any more money.*

- *than*, after **plus** *more* and **moins** *less, fewer* with quantities (page 64):
  **moins de cinquante euros** *less than 50 euros*
  **plus de vingt personnes** *more than 20 people*

- *in* after superlatives (page 66):
  **la plus grande ville de France** *the largest town in France*

- *in, within, from, of* with some expressions relating to time:
  **à sept heures du matin/du soir** *at seven in the morning/evening*
  **à trois heures de l'après-midi** *at three in the afternoon*
  **de temps en temps** *from time to time;* **d'ici une semaine** *within a week*

- *in, with* to indicate manner:
  **d'une manière étrange** *in a strange way* lit. *manner*
  **d'une autre façon** *in another way*
  **d'un air fâché** *with an angry expression, angrily*

- *made from*:
  **un jus d'orange** *orange juice* (i.e. juice made from oranges)
  **la soupe de tomates** *tomato soup* (soup made primarily from tomatoes)
  But you use **à** if you're talking about a flavour or variety:
  **une glace à l'orange** *orange ice cream*
  **le pain au chocolat** *chocolate croissant*

- where English uses two nouns together:
  **une maison de famille** *a family house;* **un film d'épouvante** *a horror film*
  **un bulletin d'informations** *a news report*
  **le zeste de citron** *lemon peel;* **la peau de banane** *banana skin*
  **des numéros de téléphone** *phone numbers*
  **le train de onze heures cinq** *the 11.05 train*

- after **quelque chose** *something* and **rien** *nothing:*
  **quelque chose d'amusant** *something amusing*
  **rien de nouveau** *nothing new;* **rien de personnel** *nothing personal*

- after some adjectives:
  **couvert de neige** *covered in snow;* **content d'être ici** *pleased to be here*
  **fatigué de bloguer** *tired of blogging*
  **Il est certain d'être élu.** *He's sure to be elected.*

- after some verbs (see page 199 for a list):
  **J'ai décidé d'acheter une nouvelle voiture.** *I've decided to buy a new car.*
  **J'ai besoin d'argent.** *I need money.*
  **Il faut changer de train à Lille.** *You need to change trains at Lille.*

## en

**En** is almost always used directly before a noun, without an article:

- *in, to* + feminine countries, continents and regions:
  **en France; en Angleterre** *in/to England*; **en Italie; en Irlande; en Bretagne** *in/to Brittany*; **en Provence; en Corse** *in/to Corsica*; **en Bavière** *in/to Bavaria*
  Masculine countries and regions use **au**:
  **au Liban** *in/to Lebanon*; **au Tyrol**
  English counties use **dans** + article: **dans le Kent; dans le Yorkshire**

- *in* + years, months, seasons:
  **Je suis venu ici en 2009.** *I came here in 2009.*
  **Je vais en France en juillet.** *I'm going to France in July.*
  **en été** *in summer*; **en automne** *in autumn*; **en hiver** *in winter* – but **au printemps** *in spring*

- *by* + means of transport:
  **en avion** *by plane*; **en vélo** *by bike*; **en autobus** *by bus*; **en voiture** *by car*; **en train** *by train*
  You can also say **par le train** *by train* and **à vélo** *by bike*.

- *in* indicating time taken to do something, i.e. *within* or *within the space of*:
  **gagner mille euros en cinq jours** *to earn 1,000 euros in five days*
  **Les piles se rechargent en deux heures.** *The batteries take two hours to recharge.*
  *In* when it means *after* or *in* ... time is **dans** (page 104).

- *in* with languages:
  **en français; en espagnol; en arabe**
  **Comment dit-on ... en français?** *How do you say ... in French?*

- *in* with colours and clothes:
  **le même en bleu** *the same in blue*
  **Elle est sortie en pyjama.** *She went out in her pyjamas.*
  **des pommes de terre en robe de chambre** *jacket potatoes* lit. *potatoes in dressing gown*

- to describe what something is made of:
  **une écharpe en soie** *a silk scarf*
  **des chaussettes en coton** *cotton socks*
  **une tasse en plastique** *a plastic cup*
  **des jouets en bois** *wooden toys*

- *by, while* with the present participle (page 168):
  **J'ai perdu cinq kilos en faisant du vélo et en ayant une bonne alimentation.** *I've lost five kilos by cycling and having a good diet.*
  **la chanson de Disney 'Sifflez en travaillant'** *the Disney song 'Whistle while you work'*

Very many common expressions use **en**:
**en arrière** *behind*
**en avance** *early, in advance*
**en avant** *forwards*
**en bas** *downstairs*
**en bon état** *in good condition*
**en bonne forme** *in good shape*
**en bonne santé** *in good health*
**en bref** *in brief*
**(une pièce) en désordre** *(an) untidy (room)*
**(couper) en deux** *(cut) in half/in two*
**en face** *opposite*
**en fait** *in fact, indeed*
**en haut** *upstairs*
**en même temps** *together*
**en outre** *besides, moreover*
**en plein air** *in the fresh air*
**en route**
**en tout cas** *in any case*
**en vacances** *on holiday*
**en ville** *in town*

The phrase **être en train de** means *to be in the process/in the middle of doing something:*
**J'étais en train de lire l'article.** *I was in the middle of reading the article.*

## dans

- physically *in* or *inside*:
  **dans la cuisine** *in the kitchen;* **dans la rivière** *in the river*
- *in* with regions, English counties and French départements:
  **dans le Nord** *in the North;* **dans le Sud-Ouest** *in the South-West*
  **dans le Suffolk; dans le Calvados**
- *in* with time expressions meaning *after, at the end of:*
  **J'arriverai dans cinq minutes.** *I'll arrive in five minutes.*
  **Il va rentrer dans deux jours.** *He's going to go home in two days.*
- after **entrer** *to enter* where English has no preposition:
  **Il est entré dans la pièce.** *He entered the room.*
- *out of*:
  **boire dans la même bouteille** *to drink out of the same bottle*
  **J'ai pris des livres dans la boîte.** *I took some books out of the box.*
  Some common expressions use **dans**:
  **dans l'ensemble** *on the whole;* **dans l'intention de** *with the intention of;*
  **dans la mesure où** *in so far as;* **dans les environs** *in the vicinity*

## sur

- *on*, literally *on top of, on the surface of*:
  **sur la table** *on the table;* **sur le toit** *on the roof*
  **sur le pont d'Avignon** *on Avignon bridge*
- *on, about*:
  **un guide sur le Portugal** *a guide book on Portugal*
  **un livre sur la philosophie** *a book about philosophy*
- *in, out of* indicating proportion and with time expressions:
  **neuf sur dix** *nine out of ten;* **un enfant sur cinq** *one child in five;*
  **vingt-quatre heures sur vingt-quatre** *round-the-clock;* **une semaine sur deux** *every other week*

  The phrase **être sur le point de** means *to be on the point of, about to:*
  **J'étais sur le point de sortir.** *I was on the point of going out./I was just about to go out.*

## pour

- *for* indicating intention or destination:
  **C'est pour toi.** *This is for you;* **le train pour Paris** *the train for Paris*
  **Nous partons demain pour les montagnes.** *We're leaving tomorrow for the mountains.*
  **Nous y allons pour une semaine.** *We're going (there) for a week.*

- *for, in favour of:*
  **Vous avez voté pour Sarkozy?** *Did you vote for Sarkozy?*
  **une association pour la légalisation du cannabis** *an organisation in favour of the legalisation of cannabis*

- *in order to* + infinitive - often translated in English simply as *to*:
  **Je travaille simplement pour survivre.** *I work merely (in order) to survive.*
  **Je l'ai fait pour t'amuser.** *I did it (in order) to amuse you.*
  **Il est trop fatigué pour marcher.** *He's too tired to walk.*

## par

- *by*:
  **par téléphone; par hasard** *by chance*; **par avion** *by airmail*
  **Il est allé par le train.** *He went by train.*
  **Ils ont été attaqués par une bande.** *They were attacked by a gang.*

- *out of, for*:
  **Il l'a fait par amour/par jalousie.** *He did it for love/out of jealousy.*

- *through, by, via*:
  **On peut entrer par les portes-fenêtres.** *You can enter through the French windows.*
  **Il est sorti par la porte arrière.** *He left by the back door.*
  **passer par le périphérique de Paris** *to go via the Paris ring road*

- *a, per*:
  **trois fois par jour** *three times a/per day;* **deux fois par mois** *twice a month;* **par an** *per annum;* **cinq euros par personne** *5 euros per person*

Some common expressions include **par** or **pour**: **par-là** *that way;* **par terre** *on the ground;* **par conséquent** *as a result;* **par rapport à** *compared with;* **pour l'instant** *for the time being;* **Pour quoi faire?** *What for?*

## sans

**sans** usually translates the English *without*. When followed by a noun there's usually no article:
**Je vais sortir sans toi.** *I'm going to go out without you.*
**Il est venu sans argent.** *He came without any money.*
**Elle est partie sans payer.** *She left without paying.*

## depuis

**Depuis** means *since, for:*
**cinq cents morts depuis janvier** *500 deaths since January*
**depuis le début** *since the beginning*

When talking about something that started in the past and is still going on, you use **depuis** with the present tense:
**On habite ici depuis trente ans.** *We've been living here for 30 years.*
**J'apprends le français depuis trois mois.** *I've been learning French for three months.*

However, in negative sentences the verb is in the past tense – just as it is in English:
**Je ne t'ai pas vu depuis longtemps.** *I haven't seen you for a long time.*
**On n'a pas eu d'électricité depuis lundi.** *We haven't had electricity since Monday.*

There's more on **depuis** with the past and present tenses on pages 139 and 149.

If you want to talk about something that happened in the past and is completed, use **pendant** *for:*
**J'ai habité à Londres pendant cinq ans.** *I lived in London for five years.*
And for something that's going to happen in the future:
**Et maintenant je vais habiter à Paris pendant six mois.**
*And now I'm going to live in Paris for six months.*
Another useful expression to talk about when something happened is **il y a** *ago*:
**Je suis arrivé il y a une heure.** *I arrived an hour ago.*
... not to be confused with the much-used *there is/there are*:
**Il y a beaucoup de restaurants ici.** *There are many restaurants here.*

## other common prepositions

**devant** *in front of*
**derrière** *behind*
**entre** *between*
**sous** *under*
**vers** *towards* (direction), *about* (time)
**envers** *towards, in relation to*
**parmi** *among*
**chez** *at somebody's house/place*
**malgré** *in spite of*
**avec** *with*
**sauf** *except*
**selon** *according to*
**voici** *this is, here is*
**voilà** *there is, that is*
**contre** *against*

**J'ai passé deux semaines chez mes parents.** *I spent two weeks with my parents (at my parents' house).*
**Nous sommes arrivés vers sept heures.** *We arrived at about seven o'clock.*

## compound prepositions

Some prepositions are made up of two or more words, one of which is **à** or **de** – which change to **au**, **du**, **aux** or **des** when followed by **le** or **les** and a masculine noun.

**à cause de** *because of, due to*
**à côté de** *next to*
**à propos de** *about, concerning*
**à travers** *across*
**au-dessous de** *below*
**au-dessus de** *above*
**au bout de** *at the end of*
**au fond de** *at the bottom of, at the end of*
**au lieu de** *instead of*
**au milieu de** *in the middle of*
**autour de** *around*
**en face de** *opposite*
**grâce à** *thanks to*
**hors de** *outside*
**jusqu'à** *up to, until*
**le long de** *along*
**près de** *near*
**pret à** *ready to*
**quant à** *as for*

**à côté du cinéma** *next to the cinema*
**au-dessous de l'équateur** *below the equator*
**Le séminaire a été annulé à cause de la grève.** *The seminar has been cancelled because of the strike.*
**Quant à moi, j'ai fini.** *As for me, I've finished.*

# checkpoint 12

1 Choose one of the following prepositions to fill the gaps (each can only be used once): **à, aux, avec, pour, en, du, par, depuis, dans.**

a **Je vais fêter mon anniversaire ..... juin.**

b **Nous partons demain pour aller en Suisse ..... deux semaines.**

c **Il faut prendre le médicament trois fois ..... jour.**

d **Tu vois la femme ..... lunettes?**

e **Elle apprend l'anglais ..... l'année dernière.**

f **Le spectacle commence ..... onze heures ..... matin.**

g **Aujourd'hui c'est lundi; nous partons pour New York jeudi, c'est-à-dire ..... trois jours.**

h **Tu peux venir ..... moi?**

2 How are the following houses described?

a **une maison au bord de la mer**

b **la maison de mon oncle**

c **une maison aux murs blancs**

d **une maison à l'ombre**

e **une maison à deux millions d'euros**

f **une maison de Sir Christopher Wren**

g **une maison en bois**

h **une maison sans garage**

i **une maison à trois étages**

j **une maison sous le pont**

k **la maison en face**

l **la maison au bout de la rue**

3 Translate these into French.

**a** *Michelle's sister*

**b** *a phone number*

**c** *tomato juice*

**d** *a bottle of wine*

**e** *see you* (i.e. *until*) *Tuesday*

**f** *it's mine*

**g** *tomorrow's article*

**h** *something different*

4 Is *a champagne glass* **un verre à champagne** or **un verre de champagne**?

5 What's the difference between **sur la** and **à la télévision?**

6 How do you say *opposite the car park* in French?

7 Decide which prepositions are missing from **un sandwich ..... fromage** *a cheese sandwich*; **un roman ..... amour** *a love story*; **..... été** *in summer*; and **..... nylon** *made of nylon.*

# Verbs: overview

Verbs are the words we use to say

- what people and things are and have: *be*, *exist*, *have*
- what happens to them: *live*, *die*, *become*, *change*, *break*
- what they do physically: *breathe*, *eat*, *run*, *wait*, *arrive*
  and mentally: *like*, *believe*, *decide*, *respect*, *dream*, *analyse*

In a dictionary you find the **infinitive** of a verb. In English, this is the basic verb, which can have *to* in front of it: *(to) arrive*, *(to) finish*, *(to) descend*. In French, infinitives are identified by their ending, which can be **-er**, **-ir** or **-re**: **arriver**, **finir**, **descendre**.

When you remove **-er**, **-ir** or **-re**, you're left with the stem of the verb: **arriv-**, **fin-**, **descend-**. A range of other endings can now be added to this stem, each of them conveying precise information about

- how the verb is being used = **mood**
- when it's happening: present, past or future = **tense**
- who/what is doing it = **person**

Each of the **-er**, **-ir** and **-re** verb groups has sets of regular endings, and most verbs use these endings. However, some verbs are irregular and need to be learnt individually.

A group of verbs called *reflexive verbs* always have **se** or **s'** in front of the infinitive: **s'amuser** *to enjoy oneself*, **s'appeler** *to be called*, **se marier** *to get married*.

Although they have the same endings as other verbs, reflexive verbs always have to be accompanied by a reflexive pronoun, e.g. **me**, **te**, **se** (page 117).

## moods and tenses

**Mode** *mood* refers to how the verb is being used.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Infinitive** | the name of the verb, i.e. the basic dictionary form: *(to) work*. |
| **Indicative** | indicating that facts are being talked about: *I work, they were working, he doesn't work, do you work?* |
| **Conditional** | referring to a hypothetical situation, often involving conditions: *we would work if… /but …* |
| **Subjunctive** | conveying that the verb is not fact but is subject to opinion, speculation, attitude or emotion: *if you were to work, should I ever work, if only I'd worked.* |
| **Imperative** | giving an instruction: *Work! Let's work!* |

**Temps** *tense* refers to when the verb is happening: in the past, present or future. Tenses have names, e.g. present, perfect, imperfect. English has

- two simple one-word tenses: *I work, I worked*
- many compound tenses which use extra words with the basic verb, e.g. *I am working, I will work, I was working, I have worked, I have been working, I had worked.*

French too has simple and compound tenses but, as you see from the table opposite, the balance is different. In French there are far more simple tenses, where the ending of the verb supplies all the necessary information without the need for any extra words.

You'll find it much easier to use French tenses correctly if you make a point of remembering that the only extra words you'll use relate to *have* and *had*.

You can then concentrate on endings. Even if you think these look complicated at first, you'll find that you soon start to make subconscious associations. For example, there's always an **r** before the endings for the future tense and the present conditional.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Infinitive** | **travailler** *to work* |
| Stem | **travaill-** |
| Perfect infinitive | **avoir travaillé** *to have worked* |

**Indicative**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Present | **je travaille** | *I work, I'm working* |
| Future | **je travaillerai** | *I will/shall work* |
| Imperfect | **je travaillais** | *I was working, I used to work* |
| Past historic* | **je travaillai** | *I worked* |
| Perfect | **j'ai travaillé** | *I have worked, I worked* |
| Future perfect | **j'aurai travaillé** | *I will have worked* |
| Pluperfect | **j'avais travaillé** | *I had worked* |

**Conditional**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Present | **je travaillerais** | *I would work* |
| Perfect | **j'aurais travaillé** | *I would have worked* |

**Subjunctive**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Present | **je travaille** | *I work* |
| Imperfect** | **je travaillasse** | *I worked* |
| Perfect | **j'aie travaillé** | *I worked* |
| Pluperfect** | **j'eusse travaillé** | *I had worked* |

**Imperative**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Travaille! Travaillez!** | *Work!* |
| | **Travaillons!** | *Let's work!* |

Verbs also have participles:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Present participle | **travaillant** | *working* |
| Past participle | **travaillé** | *worked* |

*The past historic is used only in formal written French, e.g. literature, essays, newspaper articles.
**The imperfect and pluperfect subjunctive are all but obsolete in modern French.

## person

The **personne** *person* of a verb refers to who/what is making the verb happen.

A verb has three persons in the singular and three in the plural:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1st person singular | **je** | *I* |
| 2nd person singular | **tu** | *you* |
| 3rd person singular | **il, elle** | *he, she, it* |
| 1st person plural | **nous** | *we* |
| 2nd person plural | **vous** | *you* |
| 3rd person plural | **ils, elles** | *they* |

This is the order verbs are set out in, with each major group of verbs (**-er**, **-ir** and **-re**) having a specific ending for each of these six persons in each of the various moods and tenses.

In English there's only one word for *you*, while French has two:
**tu**: a friend or family member
**vous**: someone you don't know well, someone older than you. You also use **vous** when speaking to more than one person. The ending of the verb (usually **-ez**) is the same whether you're speaking to one person or several people.

**Il** *he* and **elle** *she* are also used to mean *it*. **Il** refers to a masculine object and **elle** to a feminine object.

One ending for each of six persons in each of the moods and tenses sounds like a huge number of endings to learn – but in reality you'll find that the various endings for each person have a similarity across the tenses that makes most of them instantly recognisable. For example, in all simple tenses the **nous** ending virtually always finishes with **-ons** and the **vous** ending **-ez**.

## verb groups and irregular verbs

Many English verbs follow predictable patterns. These verbs are called regular verbs and once you know the patterns you can apply them to all regular verbs:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *to work* | *I work* | *I worked* | *I have worked* |
| *to believe* | *I believe* | *I believed* | *I have believed* |

Irregular verbs are verbs that deviate from the regular patterns:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *to be* | *I am* | *I was* | *I have been* |
| *to go* | *I go* | *I went* | *I have gone* |
| *to hide* | *I hide* | *I hid* | *I have hidden* |

French verbs divide into three groups, according to whether the infinitive ends in **-er**, **-ir** or **-re**. Each group has a set of endings for each of the tenses and moods. Once you know a set of endings you can apply them to all the regular verbs in that group. Each group also includes some irregular verbs which have to be remembered separately.

- **-er** verbs form the largest group and nearly all of them are regular. However, **aller** *to go* is completely irregular and so needs to be treated as a one-off. And **envoyer** *to send* is irregular in the future tense and the present conditional.

- Some **-ir** verbs are irregular in the present tense only e.g. **partir** *to leave*; some are irregular across the board e.g. **venir** *to come*. Many common verbs ending in **-oir** are irregular and need to be learnt individually: **pouvoir** *to be able*, **vouloir** *to want*, **savoir** *to know*, **devoir** *to have to*.

- Alongside regular **-re** verbs, there are many widely-used irregular verbs that end in **-re** which need to be learnt individually: **faire** *to do*, **dire** *to say*, **prendre** *to take*.

Several verbs have regular endings but incur a spelling change in the stem to keep the sound consistent. For example, verbs that end in **-cer** add a cedilla (**ç**) before certain endings to maintain the soft pronunciation of the **c** (page 18): **nous commençons** *we begin*.

## the infinitive

The infinitive is the basic form of a verb that you find in a dictionary, ending in **-er**, **-ir** or **-re**: **visiter** *to visit*, **dormir** *to sleep*, **vendre** *to sell*.

It corresponds to both *to* ... and ... *ing* in English, and is used:

- after another verb, sometimes separated by **à** or **de** (pages 196-200):
  **J'aime aller en France.** *I like going to France.*
  **Je vais continuer à aller en France.** *I'm going to continue going to France.*
  **J'ai décidé d'aller en France.** *I've decided to go to France.*

- after adjectives, either directly or linked by **à** or **de**:
  **L'équipe est incapable de gagner.** *The team is incapable of winning.*
  **C'est possible de perdre un kilo en une semaine.** *It's possible to lose a kilo in a week.*
  **Etes-vous prêt à nous aider?** *Are you ready to help us?*
  **C'est difficile à croire.** *It is difficult to believe.*

- as a noun, where in English we use ... *-ing*:
  **Vivre ici est un plaisir.** *Living here is lovely.*
  **Apprendre le russe n'est pas facile.** *Learning Russian isn't easy.*
  **Voir, c'est croire.** *Seeing is believing.*

- after some prepositions:
  **au lieu de/avant de partir** *instead of/before leaving*
  **Il ne faut pas entrer sans frapper.** *You can't come in without knocking.*
  **Je suis venu pour aider ma mère.** *I've come to help my mother.*

French has a present participle which ends in **-ant** and also translates as *-ing* (page 168). But it cannot be used in any of the above circumstances.

- The infinitive can also be used for instructions:
  **Pousser.** *Push.* **Tirer.** *Pull.* **Déchirer ici.** *Tear here.*
  **Attacher votre ceinture de sécurité.** *Fasten your safety belt.*
  **Remplir ce formulaire.** *Fill out this form.*

- And it's used in general questions like these:
  **Que faire?** *What shall we do?*
  **Comment préparer les escargots?** *How do you cook snails?*

Some sentences that use an infinitive in English, e.g. *I want you to go ...*, can't be translated using a French infinitive. This is because the subjects of the verbs *want* and *go* are different. Such sentences require a subjunctive in French (page 178).

## negative infinitive

When an infinitive is negative, both parts of the French negative, e.g. **ne** and **pas**, **ne** and **rien**, **ne** and **jamais** (page 128), go before the infinitive:
**J'ai décidé de ne pas aller.** *I've decided not to go.*
**Il m'a demandé de ne rien dire.** *He asked me to say nothing.*
**Ne pas marcher sur les pelouses.** *Don't walk on the grass.*

## past infinitive

French has a past or perfect infinitive, used after the preposition **après** *after*. It's formed by combining **avoir** *to have* or **être** *to be* with the past participle. For **être** verbs (page 159), the past participle agrees with the subject:
**Après avoir frappé, nous sommes entrés.** *After knocking/having knocked, we entered.*
**Après être entrés, nous nous sommes assis.** *After entering/having entered, we sat down.*

# verbs in a dictionary

In a dictionary, *v* stands for **verbe** *verb*. Next to the *v*, you'll find further information:
*irr*: irregular
*pp*: past participle (included if this is irregular)
*rfl*: reflexive
*i*: intransitive, needing only a subject; does not have a direct object: *go*, *laugh*
*t* or *tr*: transitive, needing a subject and a direct object: *give*, *use*
Many verbs can be both transitive and intransitive: *he's reading*, *he's reading a book*; *I continued*, *I continued the story*.

If you look up *wash*, this is what you might find:

**wash 1.** *vt* laver [*person*], nettoyer [*thing*]: *to ~ one's hands/face* se laver les mains/le visage; *to ~ the dishes* faire la vaisselle; *to ~ one's hands of sth/s.o.* se laver les mains de qch/qn **2.** *vi* [= *have a wash*] se laver [*person*], faire sa toilette [*cat*] **3.** *vi* [*do laundry*] faire la lessive **4.** *vt* [*of sea*] baigner une côte: *waves ~ing against the cliffs* vagues qui baignent les falaises

**5.** *n* lavage *m* lessive *f*: *car ~* lave-auto *m* **6.** [*waves*] embruns *mpl*: *the ~ of the sea* les embruns marins

## reflexive verbs

Reflexive verbs have **se** in front of the infinitive. The **se** refers to *oneself*, which only occasionally features in the English translation:

**s'amuser** *to have a good time* lit. *to amuse oneself*
**s'appeler** *to be called* lit. *to call oneself*
**s'arrêter** *to stop* lit. *to stop oneself*
**s'asseoir** *to sit (oneself) down*
**se coucher** *to go to bed* lit. *to put oneself to bed*
**se demander** *to wonder* lit. *to ask oneself*
**se dépêcher** *to hurry*
**s'en aller** *to go away*
**s'endormir** *to fall asleep*
**s'ennuyer** *to get bored*
**s'habiller** *to get dressed*
**s'inquiéter** *to worry*
**se laver** *to get washed*
**se lever** *to get up*
**s'occuper (de)** *to deal with*
**se plaindre** *to complain*
**se promener** *to go for a walk*
**se rappeler** *to remember*
**se renseigner** *to enquire*
**se reposer** *to rest*
**se réveiller** *to wake up*
**se souvenir (de)** *to remember*
**se tromper** *to be mistaken*

Reflexive verbs use the same endings as non-reflexive verbs, and **se** changes depending on who/what the subject is:

**se laver** *to get washed (to wash oneself)*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| present | **je me lave** | *I get washed* |
| | **tu te laves** | *you get washed* |
| | **il/elle se lave** | *he/she gets washed* |
| | **nous nous lavons** | *we get washed* |
| | **vous vous lavez** | *you get washed* |
| | **ils/elles se lavent** | *they get washed* |
| future | **je me laverai** | *I will get washed* |
| conditional | **je me laverais** | *I would get washed* |
| imperfect | **je me lavais** | *I used to get washed* |
| past historic | **je me lavai** | *I got washed* |

**Je me souviens du jour où ...** *I remember the day when ...*
**Nous nous reposerons demain.** *We'll rest tomorrow.*
**Il se levait à dix heures.** *He used to get up at ten o'clock.*

In compound tenses, reflexive verbs use **être**, and the past participle usually agrees with the subject:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| perfect | **je me suis lavé(e)** | *I got washed* |
| | **tu t'es lavé(e)** | *you got washed* |
| | **il s'est lavé** | *he got washed* |
| | **elle s'est lavée** | *she got washed* |
| | **nous nous sommes lavé(e)s** | *we got washed* |
| | **vous vous êtes lavé(e)(s)** | *you got washed* |
| | **ils se sont lavés** | *they* (m) *got washed* |
| | **elles se sont lavées** | *they* (f) *got washed* |
| pluperfect | **je m'étais lavé(e)** | *I had got washed* |
| future perfect | **je me serai lavé(e)** | *I will have got washed* |
| conditional perf. | **je me serais lavé(e)** | *I would have got washed* |

**Elle s'est couchée tard.** *She went to bed late.*
**Nous nous étions trompés.** *We had made a mistake.*
**Je me serais dépêché mais ...** *I would have hurried but ...*

You use a reflexive verb when you do something to a part of the body, with the possessive replaced by *the* (page 47):
**Il s'est cassé la jambe.** *He broke/has broken his leg.*
**Je me suis foulé les doigts.** *I've sprained my fingers.*

In these sentences, **s'** and **me** are indirect – not direct – objects and so the past participle doesn't agree with them. The direct objects are **la jambe** and **les doigts**. However, the past participle follows the normal rule (page 161) by agreeing with a preceding direct object pronoun:
**Il se l'est cassée.** *He's broken it.*

Many verbs can be reflexive and non-reflexive. You can have **elle se lave** *she's washing (herself)* and **elle lave le bébé** *she's washing the baby*; **je me réveille à 7h** *I wake (myself) up at 7.00* and **je réveille les enfants à 7h** *I wake the children at 7.00*. And in the plural, **se** can be used to mean *each other*: **ils s'aiment beaucoup** *they love each other very much*; **nous nous écrivons souvent** *we write to each other often*.

# word power

Hundreds of verbs are very similar in English and French. Some convert from English to French simply by adding **-er**. Many others replace the final letter/syllable with **-er**. But don't forget that they sound very different in the two languages.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| – | **-er** | **abandonner, boycotter, calmer, confirmer, consulter, contrôler, détester, informer, insulter, inventer, mériter, passer, présenter, téléphoner, tester, visiter** |
| *-e* | **-er** | **accuser, adorer, arriver, baser, causer, combiner, comparer, conserver, continuer, diffuser, imaginer, inviter, massacrer, poser, préserver, voter** |
| *-ate* | **-er** | **célébrer, collaborer, consacrer, créer, dicter, élever, éliminer, émigrer, illuminer, intégrer, motiver, pénétrer** |
| *-ise/ -ize* | **-iser** | **angliciser, criminaliser, fraterniser, marginaliser, moderniser, monopoliser, naturaliser, neutraliser, organiser, privatiser, terroriser, utiliser**<br>but not *fantasise* **fantasmer** or **rêver**, *recognise* **reconnaître** or *apologise* **s'excuser** |
| *-ify* | **-ifier** | **amplifier, certifier, clarifier, falsifier, horrifier, justifier, liquéfier, modifier, notifier, pacifier, pétrifier, signifier, simplifier, terrifier, unifier, vérifier**<br>but not *classify* **classer**, *typify* **caractériser** |

Remember to take French spelling rules into account when 'converting' from one language to the other (page 23). For example:

- English hard *c* usually becomes **qu** in French: **communiquer** *to communicate*, **fabriquer** *to fabricate*, **impliquer** *to implicate*. Similarly, *to click* (with a mouse) is **cliquer**.

- If an English verb ending in *g* is adopted into French, **u** is inserted after the **g** to keep the sound hard as in the original pronunciation: **bloguer** *to blog*, **déléguer** *to delegate*, **draguer** *to dredge, drag* (canal), also *to flirt*.

  But other verbs have been assimilated into French and so keep the soft pronunciation: **interroger** *to question*.

## false friends

**assister** means *to attend*
**attendre** means *to wait for*
**blesser** means *to wound*
**décevoir** means *to disappoint*
**demander** means *to ask for*
**disposer** means *to arrange*
**embrasser** means *to kiss*
**ignorer** means *to be unaware of*
**importer** means *to be important*
**passer** means *to sit* (exams)
**prétendre** means *to claim*
**réaliser** means *to realise/fulfil* (a dream/project)
**rester** means *to stay*

*to assist* is **aider**
*to attend* is **assister**
*to bless* is **bénir**
*to deceive* is **tromper**
*to demand* is **exiger**
*to dispose of* is **se débarasser de**
*to embarrass* is **embarrasser**
as well as *to ignore*
as well as *to import*
*to pass* (exams) is **réussir**
*to pretend* is **faire semblant**
*to realise (become aware)* is **se rendre compte de**
*to rest* is **se reposer**

# checkpoint 13

1 Two of these words are not verbs. Can you identify them?* *know, negotiate, applaud, arrival, disintegrate, play, depend, deep, realise, depart.*

2 Which of these words can be a verb and a noun in English? *disturb, describe, deny, distribute, deliver, dream.*

3 What are the infinitive endings for the three groups of French verbs? Which is the largest group?

4 Does *mood* or *tense* refer to the time something takes place?

5 Who's doing something when a verb is in the first person singular? And the third person plural?

6 Which tense is only used in written texts?

7 If *He decided to stay here* is **Il a décidé de rester ici**, what is *He decided not to stay here*?

8 If you saw **Tirer** on a door, would you push or pull?

9 What does *v irr* signify next to a word in a dictionary? And *v rfl*?

10 What's the English for **embrasser**?

11 Work out the French for *to dominate, to illustrate, to isolate, to simulate*, and for *to commercialise* and *to maximise*.

12 Given that the prefix **dés-** can signify an opposite meaning, and a **u** is often inserted after a **g** to keep the sound hard, guess what these verbs mean: **désinfecter, irriguer, subjuguer, désarmer, se désintégrer, réléguer.**

*If ever you're not sure, remember that you can put *to* in front of a verb and *the* in front of a noun.

# Questions and negatives

French has more than one way of asking a question. While **Vous habitez ici** means *You live here*, the question *Do you live here?* can be:

- **Vous habitez ici?** with the voice rising towards the end
- **Est-ce que vous habitez ici?** lit. *Is it that you live here?*
- **Habitez-vous ici?**

The one thing that French does ***not*** do is start a question with *do*, *does*, *did* like English does.

Question words such as **quand** *when* or **comment** *how* can go at the beginning of the question or at the end: **Vous allez à Paris quand? Quand est-ce que vous allez à Paris?** *When are you going to Paris?* Most question words don't change. But **quel** *which/what* has to agree with the noun it relates to.

In English the single word *not* (often abbreviated to *n't*) indicates a negative, but in French a negative consists of two words, for example **ne ... pas** *not*, **ne ... jamais** *never*, **ne ... rien** *nothing*. They go round the verb:
**Je ne suis pas en retard.** *I'm not late.*
**Je ne suis jamais en retard.** *I'm never late.*

## asking questions

There are three ways of asking a closed question in French, i.e. one which expects the answer *yes* or *no*.

- Use the same word order as a statement, but raise your voice on the final syllable, i.e. make it sound like a question:
  **Vous habitez ici?** *Do you live here?*
  **Elle est infirmière?** *Is she a nurse?*
  **Vos parents sont déjà arrivés?** *Have your parents arrived yet?*

- Use the same word order as a statement, but place **est-ce que** (lit. *is it that*) at the beginning, which indicates that what follows is a question:
  **Est-ce que vous habitez ici?**
  **Est-ce qu'elle est infirmière?**
  **Est-ce que vos parents sont déjà arrivés?**

- If the sentence is short and simple, particularly if the subject is a pronoun, you can reverse the order of the subject and the verb and link the two with a hyphen. This is less common than the other two ways:
  **Habitez-vous ici?**
  **Est-elle infirmière?**
  **Voulez-vous venir avec moi?** *Do you want to come with me?*
  **Êtes-vous sûr?** *Are you sure?*

In the **il** and **elle** form, if the verb ends in a vowel, you insert **t** to aid pronunciation:
**Habite-t-elle à Paris?** *Does she live in Paris?*
**Ira-t-il à l'étranger?** *Will he go abroad?*
**Y a-t-il des étudiants ici?** *Are there any students here?*

In compound (two-word) tenses, only the **avoir** or **être** part of the tense is reversed with the subject; the past participle stays at the end:
**As-tu fini?** *Have you finished?*
**Êtes-vous allé au travail hier?** *Did you go to work yesterday?*

**N'est-ce pas** can be tagged on to a sentence to turn it into a yes/no question. It corresponds to all English question tags like *isn't it, is he, don't we, aren't you, did she, have you, won't they*, so it's really easy to use.
**Vous habitez ici, n'est-ce pas?** *You live here, don't you?*
**Elle est infirmière, n'est-ce pas?** *She's a nurse, isn't she?*
**Elle n'est pas infirmière, n'est-ce pas?** *She isn't a nurse, is she?*

Open-ended questions, using question words such as **où** *where* or **quand** *when*, are formed in the same three ways as closed questions:

- Use the statement word order and put the question word at the end of the sentence:
  **Vos parents arrivent quand?** *When are your parents arriving?*
  **Vous allez où?** *Where are you going?*

- Start the question with the question word followed by **est-ce que**:
  **Quand est-ce que vos parents arrivent?**
  **Où est-ce que vous allez?**

- Start the question with the question word and reverse the order of subject and verb:
  **Où allez-vous?** *Where are you going?*
  **Quand êtes-vous arrivé?** *When did you arrive?*
  **Combien coûte cette montre?** *How much does this watch cost?*
  **Comment vous appelez-vous?** *What is your name?*

French question words include:

| | |
|---|---|
| **où** *where* | **d'où** *from where* |
| **quand** *when* | **pourquoi** *why* |
| **comment** *how* | **combien** *how much/how many* |
| **qui** *who* | **que** *what* (**qu'** before a vowel) |

## qui? que? quoi?

**Qui?** means *who?* or *whom?*:
**Qui a téléphoné?** *Who phoned?*
**Qui veut gagner des millions?** *Who wants to win millions?*

- When *who* is the subject of the verb, an alternative to **qui** is **qui est-ce qui**:
  **Qui est-ce qui a téléphoné?**
  **Qui est-ce qui veut gagner des millions?**

- When *who* or *whom* is the object of the verb, an alternative to **qui** is **qui est-ce que**:
  **Qui est-ce que vous avez vu?** *Whom did you see?*

- **Qui** can also be used after prepositions:
  **Vous allez avec qui?** *Who are you going with?*
  **Chez qui allez-vous rester?** *Who are you going to stay with?*
  **Selon qui?** *According to whom?*

- *Whose?* is **à qui?**:
  **À qui est ce sac?** *Whose is this bag?*
  **Ces bagages sont à qui?** *Whose is this luggage?*

**Que?** means *what?*:
**Que faites-vous?** *What are you doing?*
**Que manges-tu?** *What are you eating?*

- When *what* is the subject of the verb, an alternative to **que** is **qu'est-ce qui**:
  **Qu'est-ce qui vous intéresse?** *What interests you?*

- When *what* is the object of the verb, an alternative to **que** is **qu'est-ce que**:
  **Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire?** *What does that mean?*
  **Qu'est-ce que c'est?** *What is it?*

**Quoi?** is *what* after prepositions?:
**Avec quoi allez-vous payer?** *What are you going to pay with?*

# quel? lequel?

**Quel?** *what?, which?, what ... like?* is an adjective and always accompanies a noun, which it must agree with.

| | singular | plural |
|---|---|---|
| masculine | **quel** | **quels** |
| feminine | **quelle** | **quelles** |

**Quel temps fait-il?** *What's the weather like?*
**Quelle heure est-il?** *What time is it?*
**Tu préfères quels bonbons?** *Which sweets do you prefer?*
**Vous allez prendre quelles chaussures?** *Which shoes are you going to take?*

**Quel** isn't always next to its corresponding noun:
**Quel est votre passe-temps préféré?** *What is your favourite hobby?*
**Quels sont les meilleurs films du cinéma français?** *What are the best films in French cinema?*
**Quelle est la plus grande ville de la Suisse?** *Which is the largest town in Switzerland?*

**Lequel?** *which (one)?* is a pronoun, used in place of a noun. It must agree with the noun it replaces.

| | singular | plural |
|---|---|---|
| masculine | **lequel** | **lesquels** |
| feminine | **laquelle** | **lesquelles** |

**Voici des bonbons; tu voudrais lequel?** *Here are some sweets; which one would you like?*
**Voici des chaussures; lesquelles préférez-vous?** *Here are some shoes; which (ones) do you prefer?*

**Lequel, lesquels** and **lesquelles** combine with **à** or **de** and change in the usual way (page 48):
**Auquel pensez-vous?** *Which one are you thinking about?* (talking about a masculine object)
**Auxquels de vos amis avez-vous écrit?** *To which of your friends have you written?*
**Tu as peur de certains animaux? Desquels?** *You're afraid of certain animals? Which ones?*

## exclamations

As in English, **que** *what*, **quel** *what* and **comme** *how* are all used in exclamations as well as questions.

### que

**Que ...!** + adjective or adverb means *How ...!* in exclamations containing the words *so, such, really,* etc. The verb in these sentences is usually **être** *to be*:
**Que c'est joli!** *How pretty it is! It's so/really pretty!*
**Ouah, que c'est chic!** *Wow, that's so cool/trendy!*
**Que c'est bien!** *How great! That's really great!*
**Qu'il est craquant!** *He's so cute/sexy!*

In very colloquial French **qu'est-ce que** can replace **que**:
**Qu'est-ce qu'il est craquant!**

### que de

**Que de ...!** is followed by a noun and means *What a lot of ...!:*
**Que de monde!** *What a lot of people!*
**Que de réponses!** *What a lot of replies!*

### comme

**Comme ...!** + verb also means *How ...!* or *What ...!* It's more formal than **que**:
**Comme tu as grandi!** *How you've grown!*
**Comme elle a de belles dents!** *What beautiful teeth she has!*

### quel

**Quel ...!** + noun means *What (a) ...!* **Quel** must agree with the noun:
**Quel beau temps!** *What lovely weather!*
**Quelle coïncidence!** *What a coincidence!*
**Quelles jolies fleurs!** *What lovely flowers!*

## negatives: ne ... pas

To say something negative in French the key words are **ne** (**n'** before a vowel) and **pas**, which go around the verb. You don't translate the English words *do, does, did.*

**Je suis français.** *I'm French.*
**Je ne suis pas français.** *I'm not French.*
**Je parle français.** *I speak French.*
**Je ne parle pas français.** *I do not/don't speak French.*
**Tournez à droite, ne tournez pas à gauche.** *Turn right, don't turn left.*

The **ne** is often omitted in colloquial speech:
**Je (ne) sais pas.** *I don't know.*

- **Du, de la, de l'** and **des** change to **de** in most negative sentences:
  **Nous n'avons pas d'argent.** *We haven't got any money.*
  **Je ne vends pas de vêtements sur l'internet.** *I don't sell clothes on the internet.*

  However, when there's a distinction being made between two nouns, **du, de la, de l'** and **des** don't change:
  **Ce n'est pas du vin mais de la bière.** *This is not wine, but beer.*

- In compound (two-word) tenses, **ne** and **pas** go around **avoir** or **être** (page 158):
  **J'ai fini.** *I finished./I have finished.*
  **Je n'ai pas fini.** *I didn't finish./I haven't finished.*
  **Elle est arrivée.** *She arrived./She has arrived.*
  **Elle n'est pas arrivée.** *She didn't arrive./She hasn't arrived.*
  **Vous n'avez pas acheté de pain.** *You didn't buy (any) bread.*

- When there's more than one verb, **ne** and **pas** go round the first one:
  **Je ne peux pas venir.** *I can't come.*
  **Il ne va pas jouer.** *He's not going to play.*
  **Nous ne voulons pas rester ici.** *We don't want to stay here.*
  **Ne laisse pas tomber le ballon.** *Don't drop the ball.*
  **Il ne faut pas rire.** *You mustn't laugh.*

- **Ne** normally goes before reflexive and object pronouns (page 85):
  **Il ne se lève pas tôt.** *He doesn't get up early.*
  **Nous ne nous sommes pas très bien amusés.**
  *We didn't have a very good time.*
  **Ça ne me plaît pas.** *I don't like it.*
  **Vous ne m'avez pas écrit.** *You didn't write to me./*
  *You haven't written to me.*
  **Je ne le lui ai pas donné.** *I didn't give it to him./I haven't given it to him.*
  **Il n'y en a pas beaucoup.** *There isn't much./There aren't many.*

- **Ne ... pas du tout** means *not at all.*
  **Je ne l'aime pas du tout.** *I don't like it/him/her at all.*
  **Vous ne me convainquez pas du tout.** *You don't convince me at all.*

- **Pas** can be left out when **savoir** *to know* is followed by a question word or **si** *if*:
  **Je ne sais que faire.** *I don't know what to do.*
  **Je ne sais s'il est là.** *I don't know if he's there.*

  And in formal written French, you'll also find **ne** without **pas** after **cesser** *to stop*, **pouvoir** *to be able* and **oser** *to dare*:
  **Je n'ose le regarder.** *I daren't watch it.*

The most common negatives are:

| | |
|---|---|
| **ne ... pas** | *not* |
| **ne ... rien** | *nothing, not anything* |
| **ne ... jamais** | *never* |
| **ne ... personne** | *no one, nobody, not anyone* |
| **ne ... aucun(e)** | *no, not any, none* |
| **ne ... guère** | *hardly* |
| **ne ... ni ... ni** | *neither ... nor* |
| **ne ... nulle part** | *nowhere* |
| **ne ... que** | *only* |
| **ne ... plus** | *no more, not any more, no longer, not any longer* |

## other negatives

- **Ne ... plus** *no longer, not any more,* **ne ... jamais** *never* and **ne ... rien** *nothing* behave like **ne ... pas**:
  **Nous n'habitons plus à Londres.** *We don't live in London any more.*
  **Il ne reste plus de vin.** *There's no more wine left.*
  **Il ne me téléphone jamais.** *He never phones me.*
  **Je ne me lève jamais tôt.** *I never get up early.*
  **Vous n'avez rien fait.** *You haven't done anything.*

- The second part of **ne ... personne** *nobody, no-one* and **ne ... nulle part** *nowhere* goes after the past participle (see page 158):
  **Je ne vois personne.** *I can't see anyone.*
  **Je n'ai vu personne.** *I didn't see anyone.*
  **On ne le voit nulle part.** *We can't see him anywhere.*
  **On ne l'a trouvé nulle part.** *We didn't find him anywhere.*

- The second part of **ne ... guère** *hardly* and **ne ... que** *only* comes before the word it refers to:
  **Nous n'avons guère le choix.** *We've hardly any choice.*
  **Nous n'avons eu guère le choix.** *We had hardly any choice.*
  **Je n'ai que cinq euros.** *I've only got 5 euros.*
  **Je n'ai eu que cinq euros.** *I only had 5 euros.*

  When *only* refers to a verb, use **ne faire que**:
  **Ils ne font que se disputer.** *They only argue. They do nothing but argue.*
  **Il ne fait que chanter.** *He only sings. He does nothing but sing.*

- **Ne ... ni ... ni** *neither ... nor* is made up of three parts. **Ne** comes before the verb, as usual, and each **ni** comes before the word it refers to:
  **Je ne mange ni porc ni bœuf.** *I don't eat pork or beef./*
  *I eat neither pork nor beef.*
  **Il ne m'a dit ni oui ni non.** *He didn't tell me yes or no.*
  **Je ne peux ni chanter ni danser.** *I can't sing or dance.*

- **Ne ... aucun(e)** *no, not a, not one, not any* agrees with the noun following it:
  **Je n'ai aucune idée.** *I've no idea.*
  **Je n'ai lu aucun de ses livres.** *I haven't read any of his/her books.*

- The second part of most negative expressions can be used without **ne** in sentences without a verb:
  **Vous allez souvent au cinéma? Non, jamais.** *Do you often go to the cinema? No, never.*
  **Qu'est-ce que vous avez vu? Rien d'intéressant.** *What did you see? Nothing interesting.* (See page 53 for adjectives after **rien**.)
  **Qui est-ce que tu as vu à la réunion? Personne.** *Whom did you see at the meeting? No-one.*
  **Tu y as été combien de fois? Aucune.** *How many times have you been there? None.*

  These words can also begin a sentence as the subject of the verb, with the **ne** coming afterwards:
  **Personne n'est venu.** *Nobody came.*
  **Rien ne m'étonne.** *Nothing surprises me.*
  **Rien ne s'est passé.** *Nothing (has) happened.*
  **Aucun animal ne pourrait y survivre.** *No animal could survive there.*

  If there's more than one negative expression in the sentence, they go in this order: **plus, jamais, rien, personne, que, nulle part**:
  **Je n'y vais plus jamais.** *I never go there any more.*
  **Elle n'a jamais embrassé personne.** *She's never kissed anyone.*
  **On n'a jamais bu que du vin français.** *We've only ever drunk French wine.*
  **Je n'achète plus rien.** *I'm not buying anything any more.*

**Sans** *without* can be followed by the second part of negative expressions (without **ne**) and an infinitive:
**Il est parti sans rien dire.** *He left without saying anything.*
**Tout ce que vous avez toujours voulu savoir sur le sexe, sans jamais oser le demander.** *Everything you've always wanted to know about sex and never dared to ask.*

## negative questions, imperatives and infinitives

- In questions where the subject and verb are reversed, **ne** and **pas** go round the whole lot:
  **Peux-tu venir?** *Can you come?*
  **Ne peux-tu pas venir?** *Can't you come?*

- For one-word verbs, the rules for the negative imperative (page 171) are the same as for ordinary sentences i.e. the **ne** and **pas** etc go round the verb. Where there's an object or a reflexive pronoun, these come after **ne** and before the verb:
  **Faites vos devoirs.** *Do your homework.*
  **Ne faites pas vos devoirs.** *Don't do your homework.*
  **Asseyez-vous.** *Sit down.*
  **Ne vous asseyez pas.** *Don't sit down.*
  **Dépêche-toi.** *Hurry.*
  **Ne te dépêche jamais.** *Never hurry.*

- Both parts of **ne pas**, **plus**, **rien**, **jamais** and **guère** come before the infinitive and any pronouns:
  **Il espère ne pas voir son chef.** *He hopes not to see his boss.*
  **Il a décidé de ne plus me visiter.** *He's decided not to visit me any more.*
  **Elle m'a demandé de ne rien faire.** *She asked me to do nothing.*

  But **personne** and **nulle part** come after the infinitive:
  **J'espère ne voir personne.** *I hope not to see anyone.*
  **Ils ont décidé de ne le chercher nulle part.** *They decided not to look anywhere for it.*

**Si** is used instead of **oui** to mean *yes* in response to a negative question or statement:
**Tu n'as pas fini? Si, j'ai fini.** *Haven't you finished? Yes, I've finished.*
**Tu ne m'aimes pas. Mais si, je t'aime.** *You don't love me. Yes, I do love you.*

# checkpoint 14

1 Write the negative of these sentences using **ne ... pas**:

a **Il est étudiant.**

b **C'était bien.**

c **Je le connais.**

d **On y va souvent.**

e **Nous nous sommes promenés sur la plage.**

f **J'ai bu du vin.**

2 Which of the words in brackets belongs in the gap?

a **Je n'ai ___ d'argent (rien, plus).**

b **Il n'a ___ eu de succès (personne, guère).**

c **Je ne connais ___ cinq personnes ici (que, aucune).**

d **Je ne connais ___ personne ici (pas, aucune).**

3 Which words are missing from this sentence:

**Je ___ joue ___ au tennis ___ au golf.**

4 What's the negative expression for *nowhere*?

5 Rearrange these words to form three sentences:

a **ne téléphoné personne m'a**

b **jamais personne visite ne elle**

c **n'ai aucun amis je de vu mes**

6 Which expression turns a statement into a question?

7 Which of these words doesn't mean what?

**que quel qui quoi**

8 Match the questions with the answer:

a **Elle n'est pas arrivée?**

b **Est-ce qu'elle est déjà arrivée?**

c **Quand est-elle arrivée?**

i **Oui, elle est arrivée.**

ii **Si, elle est arrivée.**

iii **Elle est arrivée ce matin.**

9 What's the French for *isn't it*? And for *haven't we*?

10 Complete these sentences using the correct form of **quel** or **lequel**:

a ..... **est votre actrice préférée?**

b ..... **villes voudriez-vous visiter?**

c **J'ai deux gâteaux; tu voudrais** ..... **?**

d **Je ne peux pas choisir entre ces deux jupes;** ..... **tu préfères?**

# Verbs: simple tenses

The following pages guide you through the tenses of French verbs, showing you how to choose the one you need and which endings are involved.

You need to be familiar with the information on pages 109-110. Briefly:

- Verb endings tell you a) how the verb is being used, b) when it's happening, and c) who/what is doing it. The endings fit on to the stem of the verb, which you find by removing **-er**, **-ir** or **-re** from the end of the infinitive: **travailler** *to work* → **travaill-**, **finir** *to finish* → **fin-**, **vendre** *to sell* → **vend-**.

  There are many similarities between verb endings across all groups; the **vous** form almost always ends in **-ez** and the **nous** form in **-ons**; **tu** forms almost always end in **-s** and the **je** form usually ends in **-e** or **-s**. Irregular verbs deviate from the standard patterns in some way, but even most of these have endings that are similar to regular verb patterns.

- The balance of simple (one-word) and compound (two-word) tenses is different in English and French, with French verb endings doing away with the need for support words like *am*, *is*, *are*, *will*, *was*, *would*.

On the whole it's easy to relate French and English tenses, but there are two things to watch out for. The French past historic tense, which translates the simple past tense in English (*I worked, I ate*), is largely used only in formal writing. What you use instead in all other situations is the perfect tense: *I have worked, I have eaten*.

Secondly, English uses the word *would* in two senses: *We would buy it if we had the money*, which is the conditional, and *We would go back every year when we were little*, which is the imperfect.

## present tense

| | **travailler** *to work* | **finir** *to finish* | **vendre** *to sell* |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | travaill**e** | fin**is** | vend**s** |
| tu | travaill**es** | fin**is** | vend**s** |
| il/elle | travaill**e** | fin**it** | vend |
| nous | travaill**ons** | fin**issons** | vend**ons** |
| vous | travaill**ez** | fin**issez** | vend**ez** |
| ils/elles | travaill**ent** | fin**issent** | vend**ent** |

- All **-er** verbs except **aller** *to go* have the same endings as **travailler**. However, some undergo minor spelling changes within the stem to keep the overall sound consistent (pages 136-137).

- A small group of **-ir** verbs use **-er** endings. These include **ouvrir** *to open*, **couvrir** *to cover*, **découvrir** *to discover*, **offrir** *to offer*, **souffrir** *to suffer*, **accueillir** *to greet*, **cueillir** *to pick*.

  **ouvrir: j'ouvre, tu ouvres, il/elle ouvre, nous ouvrons, vous ouvrez, ils/elles ouvrent**

- Another group of common **-ir** verbs drops the consonant before **-ir** in the singular and doesn't add **-iss** in the plural. These include **partir** *to leave*, **sortir** *to go out*, **dormir** *to sleep*, **mentir** *to lie*, **sentir** *to feel*, **servir** *to serve*.

  **partir: je pars, tu pars, il/elle part, nous partons, vous partez, ils/elles partent**

  **Courir** *to run* is similar, except that it keeps the **r** throughout: **je cours, tu cours, il/elle court, nous courons, vous courez, ils/elles courent**

- **-re** verbs are the smallest group, of which the most common regular examples include: **attendre** *to wait (for)*, **défendre** *to defend*, **descendre** *to descend*, **entendre** *to hear*, **perdre** *to lose*, **rendre** *to give back*, **répondre** *to answer*.

## common irregular verbs

Some of the most widely used verbs in French are irregular. Their irregularities are minor in some tenses but in the present tense some parts of these verbs look very different from the infinitive.

| | être *to be* | avoir *to have* | aller *to go* |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | suis | ai | vais |
| tu | es | as | vas |
| il/elle | est | a | va |
| nous | sommes | avons | allons |
| vous | êtes | avez | allez |
| ils/elles | sont | ont | vont |

| | faire *to do/make* | devoir *to have to* | savoir *to know* |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | fais | dois | sais |
| tu | fais | dois | sais |
| il/elle | fait | doit | sait |
| nous | faisons | devons | savons |
| vous | faites | devez | savez |
| ils/elles | font | doivent | savent |

| | pouvoir *to be able* | vouloir *to want* | venir *to come* |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | peux | veux | viens |
| tu | peux | veux | viens |
| il/elle | peut | veut | vient |
| nous | pouvons | voulons | venons |
| vous | pouvez | voulez | venez |
| ils/elles | peuvent | veulent | viennent |

**Être** is the only French verb to have a present tense **nous** form that doesn't end in **-ons**: **nous sommes** *we are*.

**Être**, **faire** and **dire** are the only verbs to have present tense **vous** forms that don't end in **-ez**: **vous êtes**, **vous faites**, **vous dites**.

## present tense spelling variations

The following groups of verbs incur a spelling change in the stem to keep the overall sound consistent:

- verbs ending in **-cer**, e.g. **commencer** *to begin*, **annoncer** *to announce*, **avancer** *to advance*, **grimacer** *to grimace*, **lancer** *to throw*, **menacer** *to threaten*, **pincer** *to pinch*, **rincer** *to rinse*

  **c** changes to **ç** in the **nous** form to maintain the soft *s* sound:
  **nous commençons** *we begin*

- verbs ending in **-ger**, e.g. **manger** *to eat*, **arranger** *to arrange*, **bouger** *to move*, **(re)charger** *to (re)charge, to (re)load*, **envisager** *to envisage*, **nager** *to swim*, **partager** *to share*, **protéger** *to protect*, **rédiger** *to edit, to write up*, **soulager** *to relieve*.

  **e** is added after the **g** in the **nous** form to maintain the soft *zh* sound:
  **nous mangeons** *we eat*

- verbs ending in **-oyer** and **-uyer**, e.g. **employer** *to use*, **appuyer** *to press*, **envoyer** *to send*, **essuyer** *to wipe*, **nettoyer** *to clean*, **s'ennuyer** *to be bored*

  **y** changes to **i** in the **je**, **tu**, **il/elle** and **ils/elles** forms:
  **j'emploie, tu emploies, il/elle emploie, nous employons, vous employez, ils/elles emploient**

- verbs ending in **-ayer**, e.g. **payer** *to pay*, **effrayer** *to frighten*, **essayer** *to try*

  These have two equally correct versions for the **je**, **tu**, **il/elle** and **ils/elles** forms:
  **je paie** or **paye**, **tu paies** or **payes**, **il/elle paie** or **paye**, **nous payons**, **vous payez**, **ils/elles paient** or **payent**

- verbs with unaccented **e** in the syllable before **-er**, e.g. **acheter** *to buy*, **achever** *to complete*, **amener** *to bring*, **élever** *to raise*, **emmener** *to take (away)*, **geler** *to freeze*, **peler** *to peel*, **peser** *to weigh*, **se lever** *to get up*, **se promener** *to go for a walk*

  **e** changes to **è** in the **je**, **tu**, **il/elle** and **ils/elles** forms – because **e** without an accent is a weak vowel sound in French (page 16) and can't be the final sound in a verb:
  **j'achète, tu achètes, il/elle achète, nous achetons, vous achetez, ils/elles achètent**

- some verbs with **é** in the syllable before **-er**, e.g. **espérer** *to hope*, **céder** *to give way*, **considérer** *to consider*, **exagérer** *to exaggerate*, **libérer** *to free*, **posséder** *to possess*, **préférer** *to prefer*, **protéger** *to protect*, **répéter** *to repeat*

  **é** changes to **è** in the **je**, **tu**, **il/elle** and **ils/elles** forms:
  **j'espère, tu espères, il/elle espère, nous espérons, vous espérez, ils/elles espèrent**

- a small group of verbs with **l** or **t** immediately before **-er**, e.g. **appeler** *to call*, **rappeler** *to recall*, **épeler** *to spell*, **grommeler** *to grumble*, **jeter** *to throw*, **renouveler** *to renew*

  The consonant doubles up in the **je**, **tu**, **il/elle** and **ils/elles** forms:
  **j'appelle, tu appelles, il/elle appelle, nous appelons, vous appelez, ils/elles appellent**
  **je jette, tu jettes, il/elle jette, nous jetons, vous jetez, ils/elles jettent**

- verbs ending in **-aindre**, **-eindre** or **-oindre**, e.g. **peindre** *to paint*, **atteindre** *to achieve*, **craindre** *to fear*, **éteindre** *to extinguish*, **joindre** *to enclose*, **se plaindre** *to complain*.

  The plural stem ends in **-gn**:
  **je peins, tu peins, il/elle peint, nous peignons, vous peignez, ils/elles peignent**

## when to use the present tense

- The present tense is used in French where in English you say both *I do something* and *I'm doing something*:
  **Je travaille à Londres.** *I work in London.*
  **Nous travaillons aujourd'hui.** *We're working today.*
  **Je finis mon travail à cinq heures.** *I finish work at five o'clock.*
  **Et vous, vous finissez à quelle heure?** *What time do you finish?*
  **Matthieu vend sa maison.** *Matthieu is selling his house.*
  **Les agents immobiliers vendent des maisons.** *Estate agents sell houses.*

- As in English, the present tense can be used to talk about the future:
  **Ils travaillent demain.** *They're working tomorrow.*
  **Je vais au Japon l'année prochaine.** *I'm going to Japan next year.*

- For questions and negatives, you don't need extra words like *do, does, am, is, are* (although you can add **est-ce que**, page 122):
  **Vous travaillez ici?** *Do you work here?*
  **Vous travaillez demain?** *Are you working tomorrow?*
  **Je ne travaille pas.** *I'm not working./I don't work.*
  **Elle va à l'école?** *Does she go to school?/Is she going to school?*
  **Est-ce que Matthieu vend sa maison?** *Is Matthieu selling his house?*

- The phrase **être en train de** + infinitive can be used to stress that something is happening at the moment:
  **Ne la dérange pas. Elle est en train de faire les devoirs.** *Don't disturb her. She's (busy) doing her homework.*
  **Je suis en train de regarder la télé.** *I'm (in the middle of) watching TV.*

- The present tense of **venir** *to come*, followed by **de** + infinitive means *to have just (done)*:
  **Il vient de partir.** *He's just left.*
  **Nous venons de le voir.** *We've just seen him/it.*
  **Je viens de mettre la lettre à la poste.** *I've just posted the letter.*
  **Elles viennent d'arriver.** *They've just arrived.*

- After **depuis** *for, since*, French uses the present tense where English uses the form *has/have been doing*. The logic is that although the activity started in the past it's still going on in the present:
  **J'habite ici depuis dix ans.** *I've been living here for ten years.*
  **Il travaille en France depuis janvier.** *He's been working in France since January.*
  **Depuis quand existe l'internet?** *How long has the internet been in existence?*

# checkpoint 15

**1** Write the present tense of these verbs:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **dire** | **vous** | ..... |
| **arriver** | **ils** | ..... |
| **finir** | **elles** | ..... |
| **nager** | **nous** | ..... |
| **offrir** | **il** | ..... |
| **espérer** | **elles** | ..... |
| **partir** | **je** | ..... |
| **menacer** | **nous** | ..... |
| **nettoyer** | **elle** | ..... |
| **craindre** | **vous** | ..... |

**2** Translate the following into French:

**a** *We're going to Paris tomorrow.*

**b** *He's in the middle of speaking.*

**c** *She's just been here.*

**d** *I've been working here for five years.*

**3** Which of these verbs has an **il/elle** form that ends in **-e**?

**dormir** **entendre** **courir** **offrir** **aller**

## future tense

Instead of ***replacing*** the infinitive ending as other tenses do, the future tense ***adds*** endings to the infinitive, with **-re** verbs dropping the **-e** first. This means that in the future tense every single verb has an **r** immediately before the ending.

| | **travailler** *to work* | **finir** *to finish* | **vendre** *to sell* |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | travaille**rai** | finir**ai** | vendr**ai** |
| tu | travaille**ras** | finir**as** | vendr**as** |
| il/elle | travaille**ra** | finir**a** | vendr**a** |
| nous | travaille**rons** | finir**ons** | vendr**ons** |
| vous | travaille**rez** | finir**ez** | vendr**ez** |
| ils/elles | travaille**ront** | finir**ont** | vendr**ont** |

Some of the verbs which incur spelling changes in certain forms of the present tense (pages 136-137) incur these changes in all forms of the future:

- Verbs like **appeler** *to call* double the consonant: **j'appellerai**, **tu appelleras** etc.

- Verbs like **acheter** *to buy* add a grave accent to the **e**: **j'achèterai**, **tu achèteras** etc.

- Verbs like **employer** *to use* and **essuyer** *to wipe* change **y** to **i**: **j'emploierai** *I will use*, **tu emploieras** etc; **j'essuierai** *I will wipe*, **tu essuieras** etc.

  **Envoyer** *to send* is an exception. It has the irregular future **j'enverrai**, **tu enverras** etc.

- Verbs like **payer** *to pay* can form their future tense with either **i** or **y**: **je paierai**, **tu paieras** or **je payerai**, **tu payeras** etc.

However, verbs like **espérer** – which change **é** to **è** in some forms of the present tense – keep **é** throughout in the future tense: **j'espérerai** *I will hope*, **je préférerai** *I will prefer*.

## when to use the future tense

- The future tense is used in French where in English you'd say *I will/shall do something*:
  **Je lui demanderai de me téléphoner.** *I'll ask him to phone me.*
  **Les cours commenceront demain.** *Lessons will start tomorrow.*
  **Je ne sais pas quelle carte il choisira.** *I don't know which card he'll choose.*
  **Nous mangerons à l'aéroport.** *We'll eat at the airport.*

- As in English, you can use the future tense to make assumptions:
  **J'ai entendu une voiture. Ce sera mon mari.** *I heard a car. That will be my husband.*

- Unlike English, the future tense is used after **quand/lorsque** *when*, **aussitôt que/dès que** *as soon as*, **pendant que/tant que** *while*, **une fois que** *once*, when the other verb in the sentence is in the future:
  **Je vous dirai quand ils arriveront.** *I'll tell you when they arrive.*
  **Aussitôt qu'il te téléphonera, je partirai.** *As soon as he rings you, I'll leave.*
  **Tant qu'il ne pleuvra pas, on fera un barbecue.** *As long as it doesn't rain we'll have a barbecue.*

- When **si** means *whether*, the future tense is used as it is with **quand**, **aussitôt que**, etc (above):
  **Je ne sais pas s'il viendra.** *I don't know whether he's coming.*

  But when **si** means *if*, the present tense is used, just as in English:
  **S'il pleut, on restera à la maison.** *If it rains we'll stay at home.*
  **On visitera le Louvre, si on a le temps.** *We'll visit the Louvre if we've got time.*

Be careful of the word *will* in English; it's not always a future tense. Sometimes it's concerned with being willing to do something, and you use the verb **vouloir** *to want* in these instances:
**Voulez-vous passer le sel, s'il vous plaît?** *Will you pass the salt please?*

## irregular future tense forms

- Some verbs that are irregular in the present tense are regular in the future:
  **boire** *to drink* **je boirai, tu boiras** etc.
  **dire** *to say* **je dirai, tu diras** etc.
  **prendre** *to take* **je prendrai, tu prendras** etc.
  **connaître** *to know* **je connaîtrai, tu connaîtras** etc.
  **lire** *to read* **je lirai, tu liras** etc.
  **vivre** *to live* **je vivrai, tu vivras** etc.

- In the irregular future tense verbs, it's the stem that's irregular, not the endings, which are always the same.

- The common, very irregular verbs in the present tense (page 135) are irregular in the future too:
  **être** *to be* **je serai, tu seras** etc.
  **avoir** *to have* **j'aurai, tu auras** etc.
  **aller** *to go* **j'irai, tu iras** etc.
  **faire** *to do* **je ferai, tu feras** etc.
  **pouvoir** *to be able* **je pourrai, tu pourras** etc.
  **vouloir** *to want* **je voudrai, tu voudras** etc.
  **savoir** *to know* **je saurai, tu sauras** etc.
  **devoir** *to have to* **je devrai, tu devras** etc.
  **s'asseoir** *to sit down* **je m'assiérai, tu t'assiéras** etc.

- Other verbs can be grouped according to patterns in their endings:
  **venir** *to come* **je viendrai, tu viendras** etc.
  **tenir** *to hold* **je tiendrai, tu tiendras** etc.

  **voir** *to see* **je verrai, tu verras** etc.
  **envoyer** *to send* **j'enverrai, tu enverras** etc.
  **acquérir** *to acquire* **j'acquerrai, tu acquerras** etc.

  **recevoir** *to receive* **je recevrai, tu recevras** etc.
  **décevoir** *to disappoint* **je décevrai, tu décevras** etc.

**accueillir** *to greet* **j'accueillerai, tu accueilleras** etc.
**cueillir** *to pick* **je cueillerai, tu cueilleras** etc.

**courir** *to run* **je courrai, tu courras** etc.
**mourir** *to die* **je mourrai, tu mourras** etc.

- The impersonal verbs **falloir** *to be necessary*, **valoir** *to be worth* and **pleuvoir** *to rain* are used in the third person singular only:
  **il faudra** *it will be necessary*
  **il vaudra** *it will be worth*
  **il pleuvra** *it will rain*

## other ways of talking about the future

As in English, there are two other ways of talking about the future without using the future tense:

- You can use the present tense in sentences like these:
  **Je rentre à Londres demain.** *I'm returning to London tomorrow.*
  **Il part à onze heures.** *He's leaving at 11 o'clock.*

- You can use **aller** *to go* to translate *going to do something*.
  The following verb is in the infinitive:
  **Je vais visiter mes parents.** *I'm going to visit my parents.*
  **Il va venir plus tard.** *He's going to come later.*
  **Qu'est-ce que tu vas faire?** *What are you going to do?*
  **Si tu n'étudies pas, tu vas rater les examens.** *If you don't study you're going to fail the exams.*

  But don't use it if you want to talk about a state of mind. Just use the future tense instead:
  **Je serai très content de vous voir.** *I'm going to be/I will be very happy to see you.*

## conditional

The conditional has the same stem as the future tense (i.e. the infinitive) but a different set of endings.

| | **travailler** *to work* | **finir** *to finish* | **vendre** *to sell* |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | travaille**rais** | finir**ais** | vendr**ais** |
| tu | travaille**rais** | finir**ais** | vendr**ais** |
| il/elle | travaille**rait** | finir**ait** | vendr**ait** |
| nous | travaille**rions** | finir**ions** | vendr**ions** |
| vous | travaille**riez** | finir**iez** | vendr**iez** |
| ils/elles | travaille**raient** | finir**aient** | vendr**aient** |

The conditional has a lot in common with the future tense:

- Both have the distinctive **r** before all the endings.
- The same verbs are irregular in the future and the conditional, and they're irregular in a similar way – the stem is the same for both, with only the endings differing:

| | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|
| **être** *to be* | **je serai** | **je serais** |
| **avoir** *to have* | **j'aurai** | **j'aurais** |
| **aller** *to go* | **j'irai** | **j'irais** |
| **faire** *to do* | **je ferai** | **je ferais** |
| **pouvoir** *to be able* | **je pourrai** | **je pourrais** |
| **vouloir** *to want* | **je voudrai** | **je voudrais** |
| **savoir** *to know* | **je saurai** | **je saurais** |
| **devoir** *to have to* | **je devrai** | **je devrais** |

- The conditional endings are exactly the same as the imperfect tense endings (page 148) – although they're on the same stem as the future tense.

# word power

Although there are many irregular verbs in French, many follow similar patterns, so once you've learnt one verb you can apply the pattern to others. In particular, verbs derived from another verb (by adding a prefix) usually behave in the same way as the original verb:

- **revenir** *to come back*, **devenir** *to become*, **prévenir** *to warn*, **convenir** *to suit*, **se souvenir de** *to remember* behave like **venir** *to come*, as do **tenir** *to hold* and verbs derived from it e.g. **obtenir** *to obtain*:
  future: **je viendrai, je reviendrai, je deviendrai, je tiendrai** etc
  conditional: **je viendrais, je reviendrais, je tiendrais** etc

- **amener** *to bring*, **emmener** *to take (away)* behave like **mener** *to lead*:
  future: **je mènerai, j'amènerai, j'emmènerai**
  conditional: **je mènerais, j'amènerais, j'emmènerais**

- **accueillir** *to greet* and **recueillir** *to collect* are like **cueillir** *to pick*:
  future: **je cueillerai, j'accueillerai, je recueillerai**
  conditional: **je cueillerais, j'accueillerais, je recueillerais**

- **contredire** *to contradict*, **interdire** *to forbid*, **prédire** *to predict* behave like **dire** *to say*:
  future: **je dirai, je contredirai, j'interdirai, je prédirai**
  conditional: **je dirais, je contredirais, j'interdirais, je prédirais**

The following verbs ending in **-evoir** also follow the same pattern: **recevoir** *to receive*, **décevoir** *to disappoint*, **apercevoir** *to catch sight of* and **concevoir** *to conceive*:
future: **je recevrai, je décevrai, j'apercevrai, je concevrai**
conditional: **je recevrais, j'apercevrais, je concevrais**

Similarly, **acquérir** *to acquire*, **conquérir** *to conquer*, **s'enquérir de** *to ask about* behave in the same way:
future: **j'acquerrai, je conquerrai, je m'enquerrai de**
conditional: **j'acquerrais, je conquerrais, je m'enquerrais de**

## when to use the conditional

- The conditional is used in French to say what *would* happen:
  **Je préférerais rester ici.** *I would/I'd prefer to stay here.*
  **Que préféreriez-vous?** *What would you prefer?*
  **Ça me plairait beaucoup.** *I would really like that.*
  lit. *That would really please me.*
  **J'irais moi-même, mais je suis très occupé.**
  *I'd go myself but I'm very busy.*
  **Que feriez-vous?** *What would you do?*
  **J'aimerais bien ...** *I would like to ...*
  **Je savais qu'il viendrait.** *I knew (that) he would come.*
  **J'y irais si j'avais assez de temps.** *I'd go there if I had enough time.*
  **J'achèterais un yacht si je gagnais des millions.** *I'd buy a yacht if I were a millionaire.* lit. *earned millions*

- You can use it to make a request sound polite:
  **Je voudrais deux cafés.** *I'd like two coffees.*
  **Vous voudriez venir?** *Would you like to come?*
  **Pourriez-vous me dire?** *Could you tell me?*
  **Je pourrais vous poser une question?** *Could I ask you a question?*
  **Il me faudrait cinq citrons.** *I'll need five lemons.*
  **Je vous serais très reconnaissant.** *I'd be very grateful to you.*

- The conditional of **devoir** *to have to* is used to translate *should* or *ought* when giving advice:
  **Tu devrais lui dire merci.** *You ought to say thank you to him/her.*
  **Il devrait apprendre le français.** *He should learn French.*

- The conditional is also used to show that there's uncertainty about the accuracy of what's being said. English uses speech marks or phrases like *it is alleged that, it was said that.*
  **La victime serait déjà morte.** *It is alleged that the victim is already dead.*
  **Il y aurait cinq blessés dans l'accident.** *There would appear to be five people injured in the accident.*

- As in English, the conditional is used in reported speech where the future tense was used in the actual words:
  **Je lui ai dit qu'il vaudrait mieux répondre.** *I told her it would be better to reply.*
  **Il m'a dit qu'il irait bientôt à Lyon.** *He told me he would soon be going to Lyon.*
  **Elle m'a répondu qu'elle le verrait lundi prochain.** *She replied to me that she would see him next Monday.*

- Just as French uses the future tense after **quand/lorsque** *when*, **pendant que/tant que** *while*, **aussitôt que/dès que** *as soon as* and **une fois que** *once* where English uses the present tense (page 141), so it uses the conditional after these words where English uses the past tense:
  **Le chef a dit qu'une fois que mon collègue arriverait, je pourrais aller.** *The boss said that as soon as my colleague arrived, I could go.*
  **Il a promis que dès qu'il aurait assez d'argent, il le ferait.** *He promised that as soon as he had enough money, he would do it.*

- The conditional phrase **on dirait que**, which literally means *one would say that*, is used to express possibility:
  **On dirait qu'il va pleuvoir.** *It looks as if it's going to rain.*
  **On dirait qu'ils viennent de gagner.** *You'd think they'd just won.*
  **On dirait qu'elle a peur.** *It's as if she's afraid.*

*Would* doesn't always indicate a conditional in English. It can also refer to something that used to happen regularly in the past, e.g. *When I was a child we would go to the beach every Sunday.* In sentences like these, you use the imperfect tense in French (page 148).

## the imperfect

The imperfect is based on the **nous** form of the present tense: **nous travaillons, nous finissons, nous vendons, nous dormons, nous faisons, nous avons** etc. You simply take off the **-ons** ending and add the following instead:

| | **travailler** *to work* | **finir** *to finish* | **vendre** *to sell* |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | travaill**ais** | finiss**ais** | vend**ais** |
| tu | travaill**ais** | finiss**ais** | vend**ais** |
| il/elle | travaill**ait** | finiss**ait** | vend**ait** |
| nous | travaill**ions** | finiss**ions** | vend**ions** |
| vous | travaill**iez** | finiss**iez** | vend**iez** |
| ils/elles | travaill**aient** | finiss**aient** | vend**aient** |

**Être** *to be* is the only verb which doesn't conform to the above rule. It adds the imperfect endings to the irregular stem **ét-**:

**j'étais** **nous étions**
**tu étais** **vous étiez**
**il/elle était** **ils/elles étaient**

All other verbs use the present tense **nous** form without **-ons**:

**avoir** *to have* **j'avais, tu avais, il avait**
**faire** *to do* **je faisais, tu faisais, il faisait**
**aller** *to go* **j'allais, tu allais, il allait**
**dire** *to say/tell* **je disais, tu disais, il disait**
**partir** *to leave* **je partais, tu partais, il partait**
**manger** *to eat* **je mangeais, tu mangeais, il mangeait**
**commencer** *to begin* **je commençais, tu commençais, il commençait**

Impersonal verbs (pages 188-189), which either don't have a **nous** form or rarely use it, have the following forms in the imperfect:

**pleuvoir** *to rain* **il pleuvait**
**falloir** *to be necessary* **il fallait**
**plaire** *to please* **il plaisait**
**valoir** *to be worth* **il valait**

## ... and when to use it

- The imperfect is used when talking about how things were in the past, when describing people or things in the past, or when talking about events that happened regularly or carried on over a period of time. It translates *was* or *were doing* something, as well as *used to* or *would*:
  **Quand j'étais petit, on allait tous les ans à Blackpool.** *When I was little we used to/would go every year to Blackpool.*
  **J'étais heureuse.** *I was happy./I used to be happy.*
  **Il portait un pantalon bleu.** *He was wearing blue trousers.*
  **Il préparait le repas quand nous sommes arrivés.** *He was cooking the meal when we arrived.*
  **Il y avait beaucoup de gens au concert.** *There were a lot of people at the concert.*
  **Au seizième siècle l'Angleterre avait une population de quatre millions d'habitants.** *In the 16th century England had a population of four million.*

Even when English uses the simple past to talk about things that happened over a period of time, or to describe a state of affairs in the past, in French you still need to use the imperfect tense: **Quand j'habitais en Ecosse je faisais souvent du ski.** *When I lived in Scotland I often went skiing.*

- The imperfect can be used after **si** *if* to make suggestions:
  **Si on allait au cinéma?** *Shall we go to the cinema?*
  **Si on faisait un barbecue?** *How about having a barbecue?*

- The imperfect of **être en train de** (page 103) can be used to emphasise the continuous nature of an activity:
  **J'étais en train d'écrire quand l'ordinateur est tombé en panne.** *I was in the middle of writing when the computer crashed.*

- The imperfect tense used after **depuis** *for, since* translates the English *had been doing* or *had done for/since*:
  **Nous avions envie d'aller aux Antilles depuis longtemps.** *We had wanted/been wanting to go to the West Indies for a long time.*

- The imperfect of **venir de** + infinitive means *had just done*:
  **Il venait de partir quand elle a téléphoné.** *He had just left when she phoned.*

## the past historic

For regular verbs the past historic is formed by removing **-er**, **-ir** or **-re** from the infinitive and adding these endings:

| | **travailler** *to work* | **finir** *to finish* | **vendre** *to sell* |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | **travaillai** | **finis** | **vendis** |
| tu | **travaillas** | **finis** | **vendis** |
| il/elle | **travailla** | **finit** | **vendit** |
| nous | **travaillâmes** | **finîmes** | **vendîmes** |
| vous | **travaillâtes** | **finîtes** | **vendîtes** |
| ils/elles | **travaillèrent** | **finirent** | **vendirent** |

Those **-er** verbs whose stems end in **c** or **g** (page 136) add a cedilla or insert **e** after the **g** to maintain the soft sound of the infinitive:
**il commença** *he began*; **vous mangeâtes** *you ate*

There are many verbs with an unpredictable past historic, although it's the stem that's irregular rather than the endings. Here are some of the more common:
**faire** *to do* **je fis, tu fis, il fit, nous fîmes, vous fîtes, ils firent**
**venir** *to come* **je vins, tu vins, il vint, nous vînmes, vous vîntes, ils vinrent**
**voir** *to see* **je vis, tu vis, il vit, nous vîmes, vous vîtes, ils virent**
**naître** *to be born* **je naquis, tu naquis, il naquit, nous naquîmes, vous naquîtes, ils naquirent**

Several have **u** in the endings:
**vivre** *to live* **je vécus, tu vécus, il vécut, nous vécûmes, vous vécûtes, ils vécurent**
**pouvoir** *to be able* **je pus, tu pus, il put, nous pûmes, vous pûtes, ils purent**
**être** *to be* **je fus, tu fus, il fut, nous fûmes, vous fûtes, ils furent**
**avoir** *to have* **j'eus, tu eus, il eut, nous eûmes, vous eûtes, ils eurent**

## ... and when to use it

- The past historic is used primarily in formal written French, for example, in works of literature, formal reports, essays and newspaper articles.

  In informal writing, such as letters and emails, and in spoken French, the perfect tense is used instead.

- The past historic describes a completed event in the past, where English usually uses the simple past:
  **La guerre commença en 1939 et elle dura six ans.** *The war began in 1939 and (it) lasted six years.*
  **Les autres s'en allèrent immédiatement.** *The others went away immediately.*
  **Nous fîmes un grand voyage en Amérique du Sud.** *We took a long trip to South America.*
  **Le prince demanda à la princesse de l'épouser. Ils se marièrent et vécurent heureux à tout jamais.** *The prince asked the princess to marry him. They got married and lived happily ever after.*

Be careful of the word *was* in English. It's not always used for the imperfect, i.e. to talk about how things used to be in the past or events that carried on over a period of time (page 149). You also find it in sentences like these where the action is completed:
**Il fut ambassadeur de France pendant dix ans.** *He was the French ambassador for ten years.*
**Charles de Gaulle naquit le vingt-deux novembre 1890 et mourut le neuf novembre 1970.** *Charles de Gaulle was born on 22 November 1890 and died on 9 November 1970.*

# checkpoint 16

**1** When you come across a new verb, you have to know its infinitive before you can look it up in a dictionary. Decide whether each of the following is in the present, future, conditional, imperfect or past historic, and what person it is, then work out what the infinitive is.

E.g. **aimera**: future, **il/elle → aimer**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **voudrais** | **finissait** | **viendrons** |
| **eurent** | **vais** | **enverra** |
| **pourrais** | **étaient** | **regarda** |
| **préfériez** | **dites** | **recevront** |
| **faisions** | **mourra** | **fut** |
| **devrais** | **tiennent** | **serons** |
| **pars** | **saurez** | **plaisait** |

The meanings of the infinitives are given with the answers (page 263) for you to work out the translation of the above words.

**2** Replace the ending of these infinitives with the person and tense in brackets.

**arriver** (**je**, future)
**demander** (**tu**, conditional)
**vouloir** (**ils**, imperfect)
**sortir** (**il**, present)
**penser** (**il/elle**, imperfect)
**offrir** (**tu**, present)
**commencer** (**je**, imperfect)
**choisir** (**il/elle** imperfect)
**payer** (**nous**, present)
**comprendre** (**tu**, future)
**nettoyer** (**je**, future)
**écrire** (**vous**, conditional)
**attendre** (**ils/elles**, present)
**continuer** (**ils/elles**, future)

**3** Pair these phrases to make four grammatically correct sentences.

| A | B |
|---|---|
| **Quand j'avais cinq ans** | **mais je n'ai pas de temps** |
| **Moi, je le ferais avec plaisir** | **nous pourrons aller au cinéma** |
| **Je vous téléphonerai** | **nous habitions à Besançon** |
| **Si tu es libre demain** | **quand elle arrivera** |

# Verbs: compound tenses

Compound tenses are those which are made up of two parts:

- an auxiliary, i.e. support verb. Like English, French uses **avoir** *have* for the majority of verbs.
- the past participle of the main verb. Regular English past participles end in *-ed*: *lived, worked, believed,* while many others are irregular: *eaten, thought, begun.*

In French the four main compound tenses are:

- **perfect**, which uses the present tense of **avoir**:
  **j'ai travaillé** *I have worked, I worked*
- **pluperfect**, which uses the imperfect tense of **avoir**:
  **j'avais travaillé** *I had worked*
- **future perfect**, which uses the future tense of **avoir**:
  **j'aurai travaillé** *I will have worked*
- **conditional perfect**, which uses the present conditional of **avoir**:
  **j'aurais travaillé** *I would have worked*

The majority of verbs use **avoir** as the auxiliary verb, and there's a list of verbs that use **être** on page 159. The main difference between the two groups is that with verbs using **être** the past participle changes to agree with the subject of the verb.

As in English, past participles, despite their name, are also used in constructions which don't relate to the past – in passive constructions, for instance: *prizes are awarded, these pictures will be taken down.*

## the past participle

In English, the past participle is the form of a verb that comes after *has/have* in the perfect tense: *worked, played, taken, been.*

To form past participles in French, you change the infinitive like this:

| | infinitive | past participle |
|---|---|---|
| **-er → -é** | **travailler** *to work* | **travaillé** *worked* |
| **-ir → -i** | **finir** *to finish* | **fini** *finished* |
| **-re → -u** | **vendre** *to sell* | **vendu** *sold* |

Not all verbs follow these patterns. Many have irregular past participles, just as English does: *lived, played, wanted, finished, decided* are regular past participles while *given, thought, spent, eaten* are irregular and have to be learnt individually. The irregular ones don't necessarily coincide in the two languages.

- The past participle of every **-er** verb ends in **-é**, even that of **aller** *to go*, which is irregular in other tenses: **allé** *been, gone*.

- A few **-re** verbs have a past participle ending in **-i**: **suivre** *to follow* → **suivi** *followed*; **rire** *to laugh* → **ri** *laughed*; **suffire** *to be enough* → **suffi** *been enough*.

- **-aindre**, **-eindre** and **-oindre** verbs have a past participle ending in **-t**: **peindre** *to paint* → **peint** *painted*; **craindre** *to fear* → **craint** *feared*; **joindre** *to attach* → **joint** *attached*.

- Many **-ir** verbs which aren't regular in the present tense still have past participles ending in **-i**: **dormir** *to sleep* → **dormi** *slept*; **sortir** *to go out* → **sorti** *gone out*; **partir** *to leave* → **parti** *left*; **servir** *to serve* → **servi** *served*; **cueillir** *to pick* → **cueilli** *picked*.

- Verbs in the **ouvrir** *to open* group (page 134) have a past participle ending in **-ert**: **découvrir** *to discover* → **découvert** *discovered*; **offrir** *to offer* → **offert** *offered*.

- Some **-ir** verbs that are irregular in the present and future tenses have a past participle ending **-u**: **venir** *to come* → **venu** *come*; **tenir** *to hold* → **tenu** *held*; **courir** *to run* → **couru** *run*.

- Many other verbs have an irregular past participle ending in **-u**:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **lire** *to read* | → | **lu** *read* |
| **voir** *to see* | → | **vu** *seen* |
| **boire** *to drink* | → | **bu** *drunk* |
| **savoir** *to know* | → | **su** *known* |
| **pouvoir** *to be able* | → | **pu** *been able* |
| **vouloir** *to want* | → | **voulu** *wanted* |
| **croire** *to believe* | → | **cru** *believed* |
| **plaire** *to please* | → | **plu** *pleased* |
| **pleuvoir** *to rain* | → | **plu** *rained* |
| **falloir** *to be necessary* | → | **fallu** *been necessary* |
| **valoir** *to be worth* | → | **valu** *been worth* |
| **résoudre** *to resolve* | → | **résolu** *resolved* |
| **recevoir** *to receive* | → | **reçu** *received* |
| **décevoir** *to disappoint* | → | **déçu** *disappointed* |
| **vivre** *to live* | → | **vécu** *lived* |
| **connaître** *to know* | → | **connu** *known* |
| **paraître** *to appear* | → | **paru** *appeared* |

- The irregular past participles of some verbs are still recognisable because they're similar to the infinitive or present tense forms:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **dire** *to say* | → | **dit** *said* |
| **faire** *to do* | → | **fait** *made* |
| **prendre** *to take* | → | **pris** *taken* |
| **conduire** *to drive* | → | **conduit** *driven* |
| **écrire** *to write* | → | **écrit** *written* |
| **cuire** *to cook* | → | **cuit** *cooked* |

- Others aren't as easily recognisable:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **être** *to be* | → | **été** *been* |
| **avoir** *to have* | → | **eu** *had* |
| **devoir** *to have to* | → | **dû** *had to* |
| **mettre** *to put* | → | **mis** *put* |
| **mourir** *to die* | → | **mort** *died* |
| **naître** *to be born* | → | **né** *been born* |
| **(s')asseoir** *to sit down* | → | **assis** *sat down* |

## use of the past participle

- The main use of the past participle is after **avoir** and **être** in compound tenses: perfect, pluperfect, future perfect, conditional perfect.
  **Je vous ai téléphoné hier.** *I called you yesterday.*
  **J'avais déjà vendu la voiture.** *I'd already sold the car.*
  **Le train sera parti.** *The train will have left.*
  **J'aurais préféré l'autre.** *I would have preferred the other one.*

- As in English, many past participles are used as adjectives, which means they must agree with their accompanying noun:
  **un steak bien cuit** *a well-cooked steak*
  **fromage râpé** *grated cheese*
  **Quels sont vos passe-temps préférés?** *What are your favourite (preferred) hobbies?*
  **Les fenêtres sont fermées.** *The windows are closed.*

- You can use a past participle after the infinitives **avoir** and **être** to mean *to have done something* (past or perfect infinitive):
  **Enchanté(e) d'avoir fait votre connaissance.** *I'm delighted to have met you.*

  You must use this form after **après** *after*:
  **Après avoir préparé le repas, il s'est lavé les mains.** *After having cooked (after cooking) the meal, he washed his hands.*
  **Après s'être assise, elle a allumé son ordinateur.** *After having sat down (after sitting down), she switched on her computer.*

- Past participles are also used with **être** to form the passive (see opposite).

In both English and French there are past participles which have become nouns in their own right: **un fiancé, une mariée** *a bride,* **un mort** *a dead man,* **une plongée** *a dive.*

## the passive

In both French and English, a past participle can be used with any tense of **être** *to be* to form the passive. This is when something is done ***to*** the subject, rather than ***by*** it: e.g. *the room was booked by Annie* rather than *Annie booked the room.*

- In French the past participle agrees with the subject:
  **Le vin blanc est servi frais.** *White wine is served chilled.*
  **Cette fenêtre sera fermée.** *This window will be closed.*
  **Les prix ont été réduits de 10%.** *The prices have been reduced by 10%.*
  **Les fenêtres ont été fermées.** *The windows have been closed.*

- The passive often includes **par** *by*:
  **La chambre a été réservée par Annie.** *The room was booked by Annie.*
  **Le gâteau était fait par ma grand-mère.** *The cake was made by my grandmother.*
  **Le traité sera signé par le président demain.** *The treaty will be signed by the president tomorrow.*

- The passive is used far less often in French than in English because French has other ways of expressing the English passive. The most common is to use **on** *one, they, we* (page 78):
  **On m'a invité à la cérémonie.** *I was invited to the ceremony.*
  lit. *They invited me to the ceremony.*
  **On a réduit les prix de 10%.** *The prices have been reduced by 10%.*
  lit. *They have reduced the prices by 10%.*
  **On avait organisé un séminaire.** *A seminar had been organised.*

- Some verbs can be made reflexive to translate English passive sentences:
  **Le vin blanc se boit frais.** *White wine is drunk chilled.*
  **Comment ça s'écrit?** *How is it spelt?* lit. *How does it write itself?*

# the perfect tense: i) with avoir

The perfect tense of the majority of verbs is made up of the present tense of **avoir** *to have* plus the past participle of the main verb (pages 154-155).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **travailler** *to work* | **j'** | **ai travaillé** |
| | **tu** | **as travaillé** |
| | **il/elle** | **a travaillé** |
| | **nous** | **avons travaillé** |
| | **vous** | **avez travaillé** |
| | **ils/elles** | **ont travaillé** |
| **finir** *to finish* | **j'** | **ai fini** |
| | **tu** | **as fini** |
| | **il/elle** | **a fini** |
| | **nous** | **avons fini** |
| | **vous** | **avez fini** |
| | **ils/elles** | **ont fini** |
| **vendre** *to sell* | **j'** | **ai vendu** |
| | **tu** | **as vendu** |
| | **il/elle** | **a vendu** |
| | **nous** | **avons vendu** |
| | **vous** | **avez vendu** |
| | **ils/elles** | **ont vendu** |

Most negative pairs, e.g. **ne ... pas**, **ne ... jamais**, **ne ... rien**, usually go around the **avoir** part of the tense, together with any object pronouns:
**Il n'a pas travaillé hier.** *He didn't work yesterday.*
**Le roman 'David Copperfield'? Je ne l'ai pas lu.** *The novel 'David Copperfield'? I haven't read it.*

But **personne** *no-one* and **nulle part** *nowhere* go after the past participle:
**Je n'ai vu personne.** *I didn't see anyone./I haven't seen anyone.*
**Nous ne l'avons trouvé nulle part.** *We didn't find him anywhere.*

Usually the past participle doesn't change its ending when used after **avoir**. For the only exception, see page 161.

## ii) with être

A small group of verbs use **être** *to be* instead of **avoir** for the perfect tense. Most of them describe movement or a change of state:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **aller** *to go* | **entrer** *to enter* | **retourner** *to return* |
| **venir** *to come* | **sortir** *to go out* | **rentrer** *to return* |
| **arriver** *to arrive* | **monter** *to go up* | **tomber** *to fall* |
| **partir** *to leave* | **descendre** *to go down* | **rester** *to stay* |
| **naître** *to be born* | **mourir** *to die* | |

- Verbs derived from the above verbs also take **être**: **devenir** *to become*, **revenir** *to come back*, **ressortir** *to go out again*.
- All reflexive verbs (page 116) take **être**, e.g. **se lever** *to get up*, **s'amuser** *to have a good time, enjoy oneself*.
- Their past participle is formed in exactly the same way as verbs that use **avoir**, but it has to agree with the subject:

| | m | f |
|---|---|---|
| **je** | **suis allé** | **suis allée** |
| **tu** | **es allé** | **es allée** |
| **il/elle** | **est allé** | **est allée** |
| **nous** | **sommes allés** | **sommes allées** |
| **vous** | **êtes allé(s)** | **êtes allée(s)** |
| **ils/elles** | **sont allés** | **sont allées** |

- In a mixed group, the past participle is masculine plural: **Luc et Madeleine sont arrivés.**
- The use of **on** *we* is unusual in the perfect tense with **être** as it takes **est** but the past participle is in the plural: **on est arrivés.**
- The past participle of reflexive verbs also agrees with the subject in most circumstances (see page 161 for exceptions)

| | m | f |
|---|---|---|
| **je** | **me suis levé** | **me suis levée** |
| **tu** | **t'es levé** | **t'es levée** |
| **il/elle** | **s'est levé** | **s'est levée** |
| **nous** | **nous sommes levés** | **nous sommes levées** |
| **vous** | **vous êtes levé(s)** | **vous êtes levée(s)** |
| **ils/elles** | **se sont levés** | **se sont levées** |

## when to use the perfect tense

- You use the French perfect tense for both the English simple past *I worked, I ate, I went* and the perfect *I have worked, I have eaten, I have gone:*
  **J'ai acheté deux billets.** *I (have) bought two tickets.*
  **Il est allé en France.** *He went to France./He's gone to France.*
  **Nous nous sommes bien amusés.** *We (have) had a good time.*

- You use the perfect tense in questions starting with *did* as well as *has/have*:
  **Tu as acheté une nouvelle voiture?** *Did you buy a new car?/Have you bought a new car?*
  **Il est allé à Londres?** *Did he go to London?/Has he gone to London?*

  It's also used when *did* is used in a negative:
  **Elle n'est pas arrivée.** *She didn't arrive./She hasn't arrived.*
  **On n'est pas bien amusés.** *We didn't have a good time./We haven't had a good time.*

- The perfect tense is used to describe completed actions or events which occurred once or several times in the past. If they happened regularly, or over a period of time, you use the imperfect (page 148).
  Compare: **J'ai rendu visite à ma mère deux fois l'année dernière.**
  *I visited my mother twice last year.*
  with: **Je rendais visite à ma mère tous les jours l'année dernière.**
  *I visited my mother every day last year.*

- You use the perfect tense in ***negative*** sentences containing **depuis** *for, since:*
  **Je ne l'ai pas vu depuis longtemps.** *I haven't seen him for a long time.*

  This is different from ***positive*** sentences with **depuis**, where you use the present tense (page 139):
  **J'habite ici depuis longtemps.** *I've been living here for a long time.*

## object pronouns and the perfect tense

- Object pronouns go before **avoir** in the compound tenses.
  When **avoir** verbs are preceded by a direct object pronoun (**me**, **te**, **le**, **la**, **nous**, **vous**, **les**), the past participle agrees with the pronoun:
  **Jacques, je t'ai vu hier.** *Jacques, I saw you yesterday.*
  **Madeleine? Je l'ai vue en ville.** *Madeleine? I saw her in town.*
  **Mes amis? Oui, je les ai vus.** *My friends? Yes, I saw them.*
  **Mes chaussures? Oui, je les ai trouvées.** *My shoes? Yes, I've found them.*

- When the direct object is a noun, it usually comes after the verb, so there's no agreement. Occasionally a direct object noun comes before the verb and in that case the rule about preceding direct objects and past participle agreement applies:
  **J'ai acheté les chaussures.** *I bought the shoes.* (Shoes are the object and come after the verb, so there's no agreement.)
  **Quelles chaussures avez-vous achetées?** *Which shoes did you buy?* (Shoes are the object and they precede the verb, so there's agreement.)
  **Voici les chaussures que j'ai achetées.** *Here are the shoes I bought.*

- Occasionally an **être** verb takes a direct object. In these instances it forms the perfect tense with **avoir** and obeys all the rules of **avoir** verbs:
  **Il a sorti la voiture du garage. Il l'a sortie du garage.** *He took the car out of the garage. He took it out of the garage.*
  **Il a monté les marches. Ils les a montées.** *He went up the steps. He went up them.*

- When a reflexive verb has a direct object ***noun***, the past participle no longer changes to agree:
  **Elle s'est lavée.** *She got washed.*
  **Elle s'est lavé les mains.** *She washed her hands.*

  But, if you want to say *she washed <u>them</u>* the past participle agrees with the direct object pronoun: **elle se les est lavées**, because the direct object pronoun precedes the verb.

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  Compare: **J'ai rendu visite à ma mère deux fois l'année dernière.**
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## object pronouns and the perfect tense

- Object pronouns go before **avoir** in the compound tenses.
  When **avoir** verbs are preceded by a direct object pronoun (**me, te, le, la, nous, vous, les**), the past participle agrees with the pronoun:
  **Jacques, je t'ai vu hier.** *Jacques, I saw you yesterday.*
  **Madeleine? Je l'ai vue en ville.** *Madeleine? I saw her in town.*
  **Mes amis? Oui, je les ai vus.** *My friends? Yes, I saw them.*
  **Mes chaussures? Oui, je les ai trouvées.** *My shoes? Yes, I've found them.*

- When the direct object is a noun, it usually comes after the verb, so there's no agreement. Occasionally a direct object noun comes before the verb and in that case the rule about preceding direct objects and past participle agreement applies:
  **J'ai acheté les chaussures.** *I bought the shoes.* (Shoes are the object and come after the verb, so there's no agreement.)
  **Quelles chaussures avez-vous achetées?** *Which shoes did you buy?* (Shoes are the object and they precede the verb, so there's agreement.)
  **Voici les chaussures que j'ai achetées.** *Here are the shoes I bought.*

- Occasionally an **être** verb takes a direct object. In these instances it forms the perfect tense with **avoir** and obeys all the rules of **avoir** verbs:
  **Il a sorti la voiture du garage. Il l'a sortie du garage.** *He took the car out of the garage. He took it out of the garage.*
  **Il a monté les marches. Ils les a montées.** *He went up the steps. He went up them.*

- When a reflexive verb has a direct object ***noun***, the past participle no longer changes to agree:
  **Elle s'est lavée.** *She got washed.*
  **Elle s'est lavé les mains.** *She washed her hands.*

  But, if you want to say *she washed <u>them</u>* the past participle agrees with the direct object pronoun: **elle se les est lavées**, because the direct object pronoun precedes the verb.

# checkpoint 17

**1** What are the past participles of these verbs? 11 of them are regular and 13 irregular.

**choisir; envoyer; faire; venir; regarder; être; connaître; entendre; entrer; partir; payer; avoir; attendre; naître; mettre; dire; penser; boire; mourir; descendre; pouvoir; pleuvoir; ouvrir; réussir**

**2** Fill the gaps to create the perfect tense.

a **elle** ..... **dormi**
b **j'** ..... **fini**
c **nous** ..... **sortis**
d **tu t'** ..... **amusé**
e **on** ..... **téléphoné**
f **vous** ..... **arrivés**
g **ils** ..... **acheté**
h **elles** ..... **allées**

**3** Add an extra letter to the past participle if required.

a **Je n'ai pas parlé_ avec Marie-France.**
b **Marie-France? Non, je ne l'ai pas vu_.**
c **Les enfants sont allé_ à l'école.**
d **Tu t'es bien amusé_, Céline?**
e **Ils se sont rencontré_ dans un café.**

**4** Choose the correct tense from the brackets.

a **Je** ..... **de commencer quand elle est arrivée. (suis venu/venais)**
b **Vous** ..... **vos amis hier? (avez vu/voyiez)**
c **Et si on** ..... **un pique-nique? (a fait/faisait)**
d **L'année dernière on** ..... **à Biarritz. (est allés/allait)**
e **Elle** ..... **les yeux bleus. (a eu/avait)**
f **Il y** ..... **depuis deux ans quand il a rencontré sa femme. (a habité/habitait)**
g **La guerre** ..... **en 1914. (a commencé/commençait)**
h **Il** ..... **un journal quand elle est entrée. (a lu/lisait)**

## the pluperfect

The only difference between the formation of the pluperfect and the perfect tense is that the pluperfect uses the imperfect of **avoir** or **être** instead of the present. The same verbs use **avoir** or **être**; the rules for agreement are the same; pronouns and negative words go in the same place.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **travailler** *to work* | **j'** | **avais travaillé** | |
| | **tu** | **avais travaillé** | |
| | **il/elle** | **avait travaillé** | |
| | **nous** | **avions travaillé** | |
| | **vous** | **aviez travaillé** | |
| | **ils/elles** | **avaient travaillé** | |
| | | m | f |
| **aller** *to go* | **j'** | **étais allé** | **étais allée** |
| | **tu** | **étais allé** | **étais allée** |
| | **il/elle** | **était allé** | **était allée** |
| | **nous** | **étions allés** | **étions allées** |
| | **vous** | **étiez allé(s)** | **étiez allée(s)** |
| | **ils/elles** | **étaient allés** | **étaient allées** |
| **se lever** *to get up* | **je** | **m'étais levé** | **m'étais levée** |
| | **tu** | **t'étais levé** | **t'étais levée** |
| | **il/elle** | **s'était levé** | **s'était levée** |
| | **nous** | **nous étions levés** | **nous étions levées** |
| | **vous** | **vous étiez levé(s)** | **vous étiez levée(s)** |
| | **ils/elles** | **s'étaient levés** | **s'étaient levées** |

You use the pluperfect when in English you'd say *had done something*:

**J'avais fini.** *I had finished.*

**Je lui ai téléphoné mais elle était déjà partie.** *I phoned her but she had already left.*

**Margaux a dit qu'elle avait fini son travail.** *Margaux said that she had finished her work.*

**Mes parents m'ont écrit qu'ils étaient allés au Louvre.** *My parents wrote to me that they had been to the Louvre.*

## the future perfect

The future tense of **avoir** or **être** and a past participle give you the future perfect. The same rules for agreement and position of pronouns apply as for the other compound tenses.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **travailler** *to work* | **j'** | **aurai travaillé** |
| | **tu** | **auras travaillé** |
| | **il/elle** | **aura travaillé** |
| | **nous** | **aurons travaillé** |
| | **vous** | **aurez travaillé** |
| | **ils/elles** | **auront travaillé** |

| | | m | f |
|---|---|---|---|
| **aller** *to go* | **je** | **serai allé** | **serai allée** |
| | **tu** | **seras allé** | **seras allée** |
| | **il/elle** | **sera allé** | **sera allée** |
| | **nous** | **serons allés** | **serons allées** |
| | **vous** | **serez allé(s)** | **serez allée(s)** |
| | **ils/elles** | **seront allés** | **seront allées** |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **se lever** *to get up* | **je** | **me serai levé** | **me serai levée** |
| | **tu** | **te seras levé** | **te seras levée** |
| | **il/elle** | **se sera levé** | **se sera levée** |
| | **nous** | **nous serons levés** | **nous serons levées** |
| | **vous** | **vous serez levé(s)** | **vous serez levée(s)** |
| | **ils/elles** | **se seront levés** | **se seront levées** |

You use the future perfect when in English you'd say *will have done something*:
**J'aurai fini mon travail avant cinq heures.** *I will have finished my work by five o'clock.*
**Demain à cette heure il sera arrivé en Australie.** *By this time tomorrow he will have arrived in Australia.*

You also use it after **quand**, **lorsque** *when*, **aussitôt que**, **dès que** *as soon as*, **pendant que**, **tant que** *while* and **une fois que** *once*, where the main verb is in the future tense in French, and where English would use the perfect tense:
**Tu pourras regarder la télé quand tu auras fait la vaisselle.** *You can (will be able to) watch TV when you've washed the dishes.*
**Aussitôt que j'aurai écrit mon mémoire, j'irai en vacances.** *As soon as I've written my dissertation I'll go on holiday.*

## the conditional perfect

The conditional tense of **avoir** or **être** and a past participle give you the conditional perfect. The same rules for agreement and position of pronouns apply as for the other compound tenses.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **travailler** | **j'** | **aurais travaillé** | |
| *to work* | **tu** | **aurais travaillé** | |
| | **il/elle** | **aurait travaillé** | |
| | **nous** | **aurions travaillé** | |
| | **vous** | **auriez travaillé** | |
| | **ils/elles** | **auraient travaillé** | |
| | | m | f |
| **aller** | **je** | **serais allé** | **serais allée** |
| *to go* | **tu** | **serais allé** | **serais allée** |
| | **il/elle** | **serait allé** | **serait allée** |
| | **nous** | **serions allés** | **serions allées** |
| | **vous** | **seriez allé(s)** | **seriez allée(s)** |
| | **ils/elles** | **seraient allés** | **seraient allées** |
| **se lever** | **je** | **me serais levé** | **me serais levée** |
| *to get up* | **tu** | **te serais levé** | **te serais levée** |
| | **il/elle** | **se serait levé** | **se serait levée** |
| | **nous** | **nous serions levés** | **nous serions levées** |
| | **vous** | **vous seriez levé(s)** | **vous seriez levée(s)** |
| | **ils/elles** | **se seraient levés** | **se seraient levées** |

You use the conditional perfect when in English you'd say *would*, *should* or *could have done something*:

**J'aurais payé.** *I would have paid.*

**J'aurais dû leur dire.** *I should have told them.*

**J'aurais bien aimé faire ça.** *I would have liked to do that.*

**Vous auriez pu me conduire.** *You could have given me a lift.*

**Je serais allé si je ne m'étais pas levé tard.** *I would have gone if I hadn't got up late.*

**Si j'avais su que tu venais, j'aurais invité Charles.** *If I had known that you were coming I would have invited Charles.*

# checkpoint 18

**1** Change these sentences from the present to the tense indicated.

a **Il comprend.** ..... pluperfect

b **Je finis mon travail.** ..... future perfect

c **Nous y allons.** ..... conditional perfect

d **Qu'est-ce qu'elle fait?** ..... pluperfect

e **Ils se promènent dans le parc.** ..... conditional perfect

f **Tu commences avant cinq heures?** ..... future perfect

g **Je dois parler avec lui.** ..... conditional perfect

h **Si vous savez.** ..... pluperfect

**2** Choose a noun from list A and match it with a phrase from list B to form a passive sentence.

| A | B |
|---|---|
| **La maison** | **avait été emmené chez le vétérinaire** |
| **Les vedettes** | **sera vendue** |
| **Le chien** | **ont été renovés** |
| **Mes cousins** | **ont été invités** |
| **Les bâtiments anciens** | **étaient habillées par Jean Paul Gaultier** |

**3** Which of these verbs has a past participle that does not end in **-u**? **boire, plaire, croire, recevoir, cuire, tenir, entendre**

**4** Rewrite these sentences beginning **après** followed by a past or perfect infinitive.

Example: **Il a servi le client, puis il a fermé la bouteille → Après avoir servi le client, il a fermé la bouteille.**

a **Elle est sortie de la voiture, puis elle a vu son amie.**

b **Elle a vu son amie, puis elle a traversé la rue.**

c **Il s'est levé, puis il a bu une tasse de café.**

d **Il a bu son café, puis il est sorti.**

e **Ils sont arrivés à l'aéroport, puis ils ont changé de l'argent.**

# Present participle, imperative, subjunctive

French verb endings not only provide information about tense, i.e. whether things are happening in the past, present or future, they indicate other functions of the verb too.

These functions include:

- **participles**: the past participle, which is used in compound tenses (pages 154-156), and the present participle, ending in **-ant**, which is the equivalent of the *-ing* ending in English – although in French it's used much less and not always in the same way.

- the **imperative**, which is used to tell somebody what to do. In English there's only one version but there are two in French because of the two different words for *you*: **tu** and **vous**.

  There's also a **nous** imperative, used to say *Let's* ... This is usually identical to the present tense.

- the **subjunctive**, which is no longer used much in English but is used regularly in certain circumstances in French. A verb in the subjunctive doesn't convey hard fact but is usually the second verb of a sentence, following another verb expressing someone's attitude or opinion, doubt or uncertainty.

  The sort of phrase that triggers a subjunctive includes words like *wish, doubt, fear, suggest, permit, forbid, deny, possible* and *probable*, followed by **que** *that*. And some prepositions are always followed by the subjunctive.

## the present participle

The present participle ends in *-ing* in English and **-ant** in French. It is formed by taking the **nous** form of the present tense, e.g. **nous travaillons, nous finissons, nous faisons**, and replacing **-ons** with **-ant**: **travaillant, finissant, faisant**.

There are only three exceptions:
**être → étant** *being* **savoir → sachant** *knowing*
**avoir → ayant** *having*

- Many present participles have become adjectives, in which case they agree with the subject:
  **une ville charmante** *a charming town*
  **une question étonnante** *an astonishing question*
  **des tables pliantes** *folding tables*

- Some present participles have become nouns:
  **un représentant** *representative* lit. *one representing*
  **un participant** lit. *one participating*

- The present participle can also be used as a verb, describing something the subject of the main verb is doing. When used in this way it never changes – it doesn't agree with the subject:
  **Tous les trains venant de Lille ont quelques minutes de retard.**
  *All trains coming from Lille are running a few minutes late.*

- The name 'present participle' is something of a misnomer, as the present participle doesn't only appear in present tense sentences:
  **Ayant soif, elle a acheté une bouteille d'eau.** *Being thirsty, she bought a bottle of water.*
  **Ayant faim, je vais acheter un sandwich.** *As I'm* (lit. *being*) *hungry, I'm going to buy a sandwich.*
  **Relisant ton mémoire tu trouveras sans doute des fautes de frappe.** *When you re-read* (lit. *re-reading*) *your dissertation you'll no doubt find typos.*

- **Ne ... pas** etc. go round it, and object pronouns come before it:
  **Ne le voyant pas, je n'ai pas dit 'Bonjour'.** *As I didn't see him* (lit. *not seeing him*), *I didn't say 'Hello'.*

Very often the present participle is used after **en**, when it becomes known as the **gerund**: **en travaillant, en finissant, en vendant**.

- The gerund is used to talk about two actions happening at the same time, when both verbs have the same subject. The English translation often includes *while/when* or *on ... -ing*:
  **En faisant la vaisselle, elle a perdu sa bague.** *She lost her ring while doing the washing-up.*
  **En sortant de la maison, j'ai vu Claudine.** *On coming out of the house I saw Claudine.*

- It's also used to describe the manner in which something is done or how something happened:
  **Il est sorti de la maison en courant.** *He came running out of the house.*
  **J'ai perdu cinq kilos en faisant beaucoup d'exercice.** *I lost five kilos by doing lots of exercise.*
  **Elle s'est cassé la jambe en tombant d'un cheval.** *She broke her leg falling off a horse.*

The suffix *-ing* is very common in English, but it's usually ***not*** the equivalent of the French present participle or gerund.

- It's often part of a continuous tense: *I am working, she was doing*, which are translated in French by the present or imperfect tenses: **je travaille, elle faisait**.

- It comes after another verb: *We like dancing, I prefer swimming*. French uses the infinitive here: **On aime danser, Je préfère nager**.

- It comes after prepositions: *before leaving, without paying, instead of going home*. French uses the infinitive here too: **avant de partir, sans payer, au lieu de rentrer**.

- English words ending in *-ing* are often nouns: *Smoking and drinking are bad for your health*. French prefers to use a different kind of noun: **Le tabac et l'alcool sont mauvais pour la santé** or an infinitive: **Fumer et boire, c'est mauvais pour la santé**.

## the imperative

The imperative is used to give instructions: *turn left*, *come in*, *don't worry*, and make suggestions: *let's go*, *let's not worry*. There are three forms: **tu**, **vous** and **nous**.

| | **travailler** *to work* | **finir** *to finish* | **vendre** *to sell* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **tu** | **travaille** | **finis** | **vends** |
| **vous** | **travaillez** | **finissez** | **vendez** |
| **nous** | **travaillons** | **finissons** | **vendons** |

- Regular imperatives are identical to the present tense, except for the **tu** form of **-er** verbs, which drops the **-s**:
  **tu travailles** *you work, you're working;* **Travaille!** *Work!*
  **tu manges** *you eat, you're eating;* **Mange!** *Eat!*
  The **-s** returns when the verb is followed by **y** or **en**:
  **Manges-en!** *Eat some!*

- Verbs like **ouvrir** *to open*, which use regular **-er** endings in the present tense (page 134), behave in the same way:
  **tu ouvres** *you open;* **Ouvre la porte!** *Open the door!*

- **Aller** *to go* is irregular only in the **tu** form, and it loses and regains the **-s** in the same way as other verbs:
  **Va chez le dentiste!** *Go to the dentist!*
  **Vas-y!** *Go (on)!*

- **Être**, **avoir** and **savoir** have the following irregular imperatives (**tu, vous, nous**):
  **être** *to be*: **sois, soyez, soyons**
  **avoir** *to have*: **aie, ayez, ayons**
  **savoir** *to know*: **sache, sachez, sachons**
  **Soyez sages, mes enfants!** *Be good, children!*
  **Ayez la bonté d'attendre.** *Be so kind as to wait.* lit. *Have the goodness to wait.*
  **Sache que je t'aime.** *Know that I love you.*

## ... and how to use it

You use the imperative to tell someone what to do, to give advice and to make suggestions:
**Tournez à gauche.** *Turn left.*
**Entre.** *Come in.*
**Allons-y.** *Let's go.*

To make imperatives negative, you put **ne ... pas** or **ne** and another negative round the verb:
**Ne parlez pas!** *Don't speak!*
**Ne dites rien!** *Don't say anything!*
**N'aie jamais peur!** *Never be afraid!*

Object pronouns come after the imperative in positive sentences and follow the usual order (page 84). **Me** changes to **moi** when it's the only pronoun or when it appears with **le**, **la**, **les** or **y**. In these instances **moi** comes at the end of the sequence:
**Aide-moi!** *Help me!*
**Donne-moi les chocolats! Donne-les-moi!** *Give me the chocolates! Give them to me!*
**Emmènes-y-moi!** *Take me there!*

Reflexive pronouns also come after the imperative and are joined to it by a hyphen. **Te** changes to **toi**:
**Assieds-toi!** *Sit down!*
**Levez-vous!** *Stand up!*
**S'en aller** is an exception:
**Va-t-en!/Allez-vous-en!** *Go away!*

Object and reflexive pronouns come before the verb in negative imperatives. They follow the usual order (page 84):
**Ne m'en donnez pas!** *Don't give me any!*
**Ne le lui envoie pas!** *Don't send it to him!*
**Ne vous inquiétez pas!** *Don't worry!*
**Ne t'assieds jamais!** *Never sit down!*

Although there's a spelling difference in the **tu** imperative, it makes no difference when you're talking – all regular imperatives sound exactly the same as the present tense.

## the subjunctive: present tense

There are four tenses of the subjunctive: present, imperfect, perfect and pluperfect. In practice, only the present and perfect subjunctive are used in modern-day French. The others are very rarely found outside literature from previous centuries.

To form the **present subjunctive** of regular **-er**, **-ir** and **-re** verbs, take the **ils/elles** form of the present indicative (page 134) – **travaillent, finissent, vendent** – remove the **-ent** and add these endings:

| | **travailler** *to work* | **finir** *to finish* | **vendre** *to sell* |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | travaill**e** | finiss**e** | vend**e** |
| tu | travaill**es** | finiss**es** | vend**es** |
| il/elle | travaill**e** | finiss**e** | vend**e** |
| nous | travaill**ions** | finiss**ions** | vend**ions** |
| vous | travaill**iez** | finiss**iez** | vend**iez** |
| ils/elles | travaill**ent** | finiss**ent** | vend**ent** |

- The endings are the same for all three groups.
- The subjunctive of regular **-er** verbs in the **je**, **tu**, **il/elle** and **ils/elles** forms is the same as the indicative.
- The subjunctive of the **ils/elles** forms of **-ir** and **-re** verbs is the same as the indicative.
- The subjunctive of all **nous** and **vous** forms is the same as the imperfect indicative.

Many verbs have some irregularities in the present subjunctive (pages 176–177). **Être** *to be* and **avoir** *to have* are completely irregular.

| | **être** | **avoir** |
|---|---|---|
| **je** | **sois** | **aie** |
| **tu** | **sois** | **aies** |
| **il/elle** | **soit** | **ait** |
| **nous** | **soyons** | **ayons** |
| **vous** | **soyez** | **ayez** |
| **ils/elles** | **soient** | **aient** |

## ... and past tenses

The **perfect subjunctive** is the present subjunctive of **avoir** (page 174) or **être** (page 174) followed by the past participle.

| | **travailler** *to work* | **aller** *to go* |
|---|---|---|
| **je/j'** | **aie travaillé** | **sois allé(e)** |
| **tu** | **aies travaillé** | **sois allé(e)** |
| **il/elle** | **ait travaillé** | **soit allé(e)** |
| **nous** | **ayons travaillé** | **soyons allé(e)s** |
| **vous** | **ayez travaillé** | **soyez allé(e)(s)** |
| **ils/elles** | **aient travaillé** | **soient allé(e)s** |

To form the **imperfect subjunctive**, take the stem of the past historic (page 150) and add these endings:

| | **travailler** *to work* | **finir** *to finish* | **vendre** *to sell* |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | travaill**asse** | fin**isse** | vend**isse** |
| tu | travaill**asses** | fin**isses** | vend**isses** |
| il/elle | travaill**ât** | fin**ît** | vend**ît** |
| nous | travaill**assions** | fin**issions** | vend**issions** |
| vous | travaill**assiez** | fin**issiez** | vend**issiez** |
| ils/elles | travaill**assent** | fin**issent** | vend**issent** |

If there's a **u** in the past historic endings, that **u** remains in the imperfect subjunctive: **être: je fusse; avoir: j'eusse; devoir: je dusse**.

The **pluperfect subjunctive** is the imperfect subjunctive of **avoir** or **être** followed by the past participle:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **je/j'** | **eusse travaillé** | **fusse allé(e)** |
| **tu** | **eusses travaillé** | **fusses allé(e)** |
| **il/elle** | **eût travaillé** | **fût allé(e)** |
| **nous** | **eussions travaillé** | **fussions allé(e)s** |
| **vous** | **eussiez travaillé** | **fussiez allé(e)(s)** |
| **ils/elles** | **eussent travaillé** | **fussent allé(e)s** |

## the subjunctive: present tense

There are four tenses of the subjunctive: present, imperfect, perfect and pluperfect. In practice, only the present and perfect subjunctive are used in modern-day French. The others are very rarely found outside literature from previous centuries.

To form the **present subjunctive** of regular **-er**, **-ir** and **-re** verbs, take the **ils/elles** form of the present indicative (page 134) – **travaillent, finissent, vendent** – remove the **-ent** and add these endings:

| | **travailler** *to work* | **finir** *to finish* | **vendre** *to sell* |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | travaill**e** | finiss**e** | vend**e** |
| tu | travaill**es** | finiss**es** | vend**es** |
| il/elle | travaill**e** | finiss**e** | vend**e** |
| nous | travaill**ions** | finiss**ions** | vend**ions** |
| vous | travaill**iez** | finiss**iez** | vend**iez** |
| ils/elles | travaill**ent** | finiss**ent** | vend**ent** |

- The endings are the same for all three groups.
- The subjunctive of regular **-er** verbs in the **je, tu, il/elle** and **ils/elles** forms is the same as the indicative.
- The subjunctive of the **ils/elles** forms of **-ir** and **-re** verbs is the same as the indicative.
- The subjunctive of all **nous** and **vous** forms is the same as the imperfect indicative.

Many verbs have some irregularities in the present subjunctive (pages 176–177). **Être** *to be* and **avoir** *to have* are completely irregular.

| | **être** | **avoir** |
|---|---|---|
| **je** | **sois** | **aie** |
| **tu** | **sois** | **aies** |
| **il/elle** | **soit** | **ait** |
| **nous** | **soyons** | **ayons** |
| **vous** | **soyez** | **ayez** |
| **ils/elles** | **soient** | **aient** |

## ... and past tenses

The **perfect subjunctive** is the present subjunctive of **avoir** (page 174) or **être** (page 174) followed by the past participle.

| | **travailler** *to work* | **aller** *to go* |
|---|---|---|
| **je/j'** | **aie travaillé** | **sois allé(e)** |
| **tu** | **aies travaillé** | **sois allé(e)** |
| **il/elle** | **ait travaillé** | **soit allé(e)** |
| **nous** | **ayons travaillé** | **soyons allé(e)s** |
| **vous** | **ayez travaillé** | **soyez allé(e)(s)** |
| **ils/elles** | **aient travaillé** | **soient allé(e)s** |

To form the **imperfect subjunctive**, take the stem of the past historic (page 150) and add these endings:

| | **travailler** *to work* | **finir** *to finish* | **vendre** *to sell* |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | travaill**asse** | fini**sse** | vendi**sse** |
| tu | travaill**asses** | fini**sses** | vendi**sses** |
| il/elle | travaill**ât** | fin**ît** | vend**ît** |
| nous | travaill**assions** | fini**ssions** | vendi**ssions** |
| vous | travaill**assiez** | fini**ssiez** | vendi**ssiez** |
| ils/elles | travaill**assent** | fini**ssent** | vendi**ssent** |

If there's a **u** in the past historic endings, that **u** remains in the imperfect subjunctive: **être: je fusse; avoir: j'eusse; devoir: je dusse**.

The **pluperfect subjunctive** is the imperfect subjunctive of **avoir** or **être** followed by the past participle:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **je/j'** | **eusse travaillé** | **fusse allé(e)** |
| **tu** | **eusses travaillé** | **fusses allé(e)** |
| **il/elle** | **eût travaillé** | **fût allé(e)** |
| **nous** | **eussions travaillé** | **fussions allé(e)s** |
| **vous** | **eussiez travaillé** | **fussiez allé(e)(s)** |
| **ils/elles** | **eussent travaillé** | **fussent allé(e)s** |

## irregular subjunctives

Many verbs that are irregular in some other tenses form their present subjunctive in the same way as regular verbs, i.e. their stem is based on the **ils/elles** form of the present indicative:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **conduire** | *to drive* | **je conduise, tu conduises, il/elle conduise, nous conduisions, vous conduisiez, ils/elles conduisent** |
| **connaître** | *to know* | **je connaisse, tu connaisses, il/elle connaisse, nous connaissions, vous connaissiez, ils/elles connaissent** |
| **dire** | *to say* | **je dise, tu dises, il/elle dise, nous disions, vous disiez, ils/elles disent** |
| **écrire** | *to write* | **j'écrive, tu écrives, il/elle écrive, nous écrivions, vous écriviez, ils/elles écrivent** |
| **mettre** | *to put* | **je mette, tu mettes, il/elle mette, nous mettions, vous mettiez, ils/elles mettent** |
| **ouvrir** | *to open* | **j'ouvre, tu ouvres, il ouvre, nous ouvrions, vous ouvriez, ils/elles ouvrent** |
| **partir** | *to leave* | **je parte, tu partes, il/elle parte, nous partions, vous partiez, ils/elles partent** |

The verbs listed on page 137, which double up the final consonant of the stem or add a grave accent to the **e** in the **je**, **tu**, **il/elle** and **ils/elles** forms of the present indicative, or change **y** to **i**, do so in the present subjunctive too:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **acheter** | *to buy* | **j'achète, tu achètes, il/elle achète, nous achetions, vous achetiez, ils/elles achètent** |
| **appeler** | *to call* | **j'appelle, tu appelles, il/elle appelle, nous appelions, vous appeliez, ils/elles appellent** |
| **employer** | *to use* | **j'emploie, tu emploies, il/elle emploie, nous employions, vous employiez, ils/elles emploient** |

Many other irregular verbs form their present subjunctive in the regular way for the **je**, **tu**, **il/elle** and **ils/elles** forms, but their **nous** and **vous** forms have a different stem, which is identical to their present indicative stem:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **boire** | *to drink* | **je boive, tu boives, il/elle boive, nous buvions, vous buviez, ils/elles boivent** |
| **croire** | *to believe* | **je croie, tu croies, il/elle croie, nous croyions, vous croyiez, ils/elles croient** |
| **devoir** | *to have to* | **je doive, tu doives, il/elle doive, nous devions, vous deviez, ils/elles doivent** |
| **prendre** | *to take* | **je prenne, tu prennes, il/elle prenne, nous prenions, vous preniez, ils/elles prennent** |
| **recevoir** | *to receive* | **je reçoive, tu reçoives, il/elle reçoive, nous recevions, vous receviez, ils/elles reçoivent** |
| **venir** | *to come* | **je vienne, tu viennes, il/elle vienne, nous venions, vous veniez, ils/elles viennent** |
| **voir** | *to see* | **je voie, tu voies, il/elle voie, nous voyions, vous voyiez, ils/elles voient** |

Similarly, some irregular verbs have different stems in the **nous** and **vous** forms:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **aller** | *to go* | **j'aille, tu ailles, il/elle aille, nous allions, vous alliez, ils/elles aillent** |
| **vouloir** | *to want* | **je veuille, tu veuilles, il/elle veuille, nous voulions, vous vouliez, ils/elles veuillent** |

Other verbs which have an irregular subjunctive keep the same stem throughout:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **faire** | *to do* | **je fasse, tu fasses, il/elle fasse, nous fassions, vous fassiez, ils/elles fassent** |
| **pouvoir** | *to be able* | **je puisse, tu puisses, il/elle puisse, nous puissions, vous puissiez, ils/elles puissent** |
| **savoir** | *to know* | **je sache, tu saches, il/elle sache, nous sachions, vous sachiez, ils/elles sachent** |

## when to use the subjunctive: 1

In English, the subjunctive is no longer widely used, and appears most often in expressions like these: *if only it were true; be that as it may; until death do us part; perish the thought*.

In French, it's needed whenever opinions and attitudes are involved, when you're talking about things that aren't actually fact.

The subjunctive is generally the second verb in a sentence, introduced by **que**, and it's only needed when the subjects of the two verbs are different – if they're the same, the second verb is in the infinitive (page 114).

The types of verbs that are followed by **que** and the subjunctive are verbs which express:

- wanting and liking:
  **Je voudrais qu'il vienne.** *I'd like him to come.*
  **Je préfère que tu y ailles seul.** *I'd prefer you to go (there) alone.*
  **Tu souhaites que je sois différent?** *Do you wish I were different?*

- suggesting, requiring and expecting:
  **Je propose que nous fassions un barbecue chez moi.** *I suggest that we have a barbecue at my place.*
  **Je demande que tu reviennes de bonne heure.** *I'm asking you to come back early.*
  **J'attends qu'il vienne.** *I expect him to come./I expect he'll come.*
  But **espérer** *to hope* is ***not*** followed by the subjunctive:
  **J'espère qu'il viendra.** *I hope he will come.*

- ordering, permission and forbidding:
  **Il a ordonné que vous fassiez attention.** *He's ordered you to pay attention.*
  **La loi interdit qu'on boive de l'alcool dans le métro.** *The law forbids you to drink alcohol on the Underground.*
  **Il permet qu'elle y aille.** *He allows her to go there.*

- emotions, e.g. joy, anger, sadness, sorrow, disappointment:
  **Je suis désolé que tu ne puisses pas venir.** *I'm sorry that you can't come.*
  **Je suis content que tu sois content.** *I'm happy that you're happy.*

- doubt, denial and possibility:
  **Je doute qu'elle soit coupable.** *I doubt that she's guilty.*
  **Le chef nie qu'il y ait un problème.** *The boss denies there's a problem.*
  **Il est possible qu'il l'ait fait.** *It's possible that he did it.*

- fear: **ne** is sometimes added before the second verb, even if the meaning is not negative:
  **J'ai peur qu'il (ne) soit arrêté.** *I'm afraid he'll be arrested.*
  **Je crains que le chien (ne) me morde.** *I'm afraid the dog will bite me.*
  If **pas** were added to the above sentences they would mean *I'm afraid he won't be arrested* and *that the dog won't bite*.

- mental reaction or value judgement:
  **Quel scandale qu'on ait gaspillé l'argent.** *What a scandal that the money has been squandered.*
  **Il est incroyable qu'elle ait raté l'examen.** *It's unbelievable that she failed the exam.*

- thinking or believing in the negative only:
  **Je ne pense pas que vous arriviez à l'heure.** *I don't think you'll arrive on time.*
  ***But* Je pense que vous arriverez à l'heure** *I think you will arrive on time.*
  **Je ne crois pas que les Anglais soient polis.** *I don't believe that the English are polite.*
  ***But* Je crois que les Anglais sont polis.** *I believe the English are polite.*

- impersonal expressions such as **il est** or **il semble/paraît + nécessaire, essentiel, important, normal, possible, dommage** *a pity*, **urgent, utile** *useful*, and **il est temps** *it's time* and **il vaut mieux** *it's better*:
  **Il est urgent que nous sachions tous les détails.** *It's urgent that we know all the details.*
  **Il est temps qu'il me dise la verité.** *It's time he told me the truth.*

  **Il faut** *it's necessary* can be followed by an infinitive or a subjunctive:
  **il (me) faut partir** or **il faut que je parte** *I must leave*.

## when to use the subjunctive: 2

- Several conjunctions have to be followed by the subjunctive. The most widely used are **bien que, quoique** *although*, **jusqu'à ce que** *until*, **en attendant que** *while*, **afin que, pour que** *so that*, **à condition que** *provided that*, **sans que** *without*:
  **Téléphone-moi afin que je sache où tu es.** *Phone me so that I know where you are.*
  **C'est un bon film bien qu'il soit très long.** *It's a good film although it's very long.*
  **Vous ne pouvez pas sortir jusqu'à ce que vous finissiez votre travail.** *You can't go until you finish your work.*
  **Je veux sortir sans que le chef me voie.** *I want to leave without the boss seeing me.*

- A few conjunctions can also take an (optional) **ne** which doesn't have a negative meaning: **avant que** *before*, **à moins que** *unless*, **de peur que, de crainte que** *for fear that*:
  **avant qu'il (ne) soit trop tard** *before it's too late*
  **Je ne viendrai pas à moins qu'il (ne) m'invite.** *I won't come unless he invites me.*
  **J'ai peur qu'ils (ne) me voient ici.** *I'm afraid they'll see me here.*

The subjunctive is also used:

- in clauses beginning with **qui** or **que** after a superlative or **premier** *first*, **dernier** *last*, **seul** *only*:
  **C'est la seule chose qu'il comprenne.** *It's the only thing he understands.*
  **C'est l'homme le plus intéressant que je connaisse.** *He's the most interesting man I know.*
  **C'est la plus belle ville que j'aie jamais vue.** *It's the most beautiful town I've ever seen.*

- after **ne ... personne** *nobody*, as well as **rien qui** *nothing who/which* and **quelqu'un qui** *someone who* in questions only:
  **Je ne connais personne qui puisse le faire.** *I don't know anyone who can do it.*
  **Y a-t-il quelqu'un qui sache la réponse?** *Is there anyone who knows the answer?*

- after the indefinite expressions **quoi que, quel que** *whatever*, **qui que** *whoever*, **où que** *wherever*:
  **quoi que vous veuillez savoir** *whatever you want to know*
  **qui que vous soyez** *whoever you may be*
  **quelles que soient les difficultés** *whatever the difficulties may be*
  **où que vous alliez** *wherever you go*

  But not with **chaque fois que** *whenever*:
  **chaque fois que je vais en ville** *whenever I go to town*

- in a few familiar phrases:
  **Vive la France!** *Long live France!*
  **Que Dieu te bénisse!** *(May) God bless you!*
  **Qu'ils mangent de la brioche!** *Let them eat cake!*
  **advienne que pourra** *come what may*
  **ainsi soit-il** *so be it*

## present or perfect subjunctive?

The present subjunctive is used for actions that take place at the same time as, or later than, the action of the verb in the first part of the sentence:
**Je veux que tu partes maintenant/à deux heures.** *I want you to leave now/at two o'clock.*
**Je ne pense pas qu'il vienne.** *I don't think he's coming/he will come.*
**Je ne pensais pas qu'il vienne.** *I didn't think he would come.*

The perfect subjunctive is used for actions that have taken place earlier than the action of the verb in the first part of the sentence:
**Je ne pense pas qu'il soit arrivé.** *I don't think he's arrived.*
**Je suis content que vous soyez venu.** *I'm pleased (that) you came.*
**J'étais content que vous soyez venu.** *I was pleased you came.*

# checkpoint 20

1 Write the present subjunctive of the following:

a **il** ..... **(partir)**
b **nous** ..... **(être)**
c **je** ..... **(choisir)**
d **vous** ..... **(venir)**
e **elles** ..... **(boire)**
f **tu** ..... **(dire)**
g **nous** ..... **(prendre)**
h **on** ..... **(vouloir)**
i **j'** ..... **(aller)**
j **vous** ..... **(pouvoir)**
k **elle** ..... **(amener)**
l **il** ..... **(avoir)**

2 Which of these is ***not*** followed by the subjunctive?

a **avant que, après que, afin que, à moins que**

b **proposer que, permettre que, espérer que, préférer que, souhaiter que**

3 Write the correct verb in the gaps, choosing the correct form of one of **être, faire, venir, vouloir** or **avoir**.

a **Je voudrais que tu** ..... **me voir.**
b **Je suis désolé que tu n'** ..... **pas trouvé ta montre.**
c **Je ne pense pas qu'il** ..... **coupable.**
d **Je ne connais personne qui** ..... **le faire.**
e **C'est essentiel qu'elle** ..... **ses devoirs.**

4 Make the first verb in these sentences negative, which means that the following verb must be in the subjunctive.

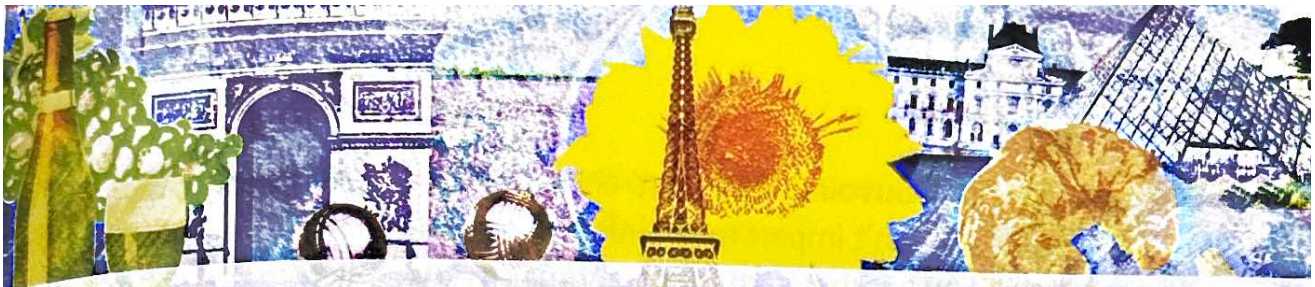
Example: **Je pense qu'elle est arrivée → Je ne pense pas qu'elle soit arrivée.**

a **Je pense qu'il a fini.**
b **Je crois qu'elle sait la réponse.**
c **Je pense que tu es trop timide.**

5 Convert these commands into a sentence beginning **Je veux que ...**

Example: **Viens ici ! → Je veux que tu viennes ici.**

a **Finis maintenant!**
b **Faites attention!**
c **Allons-y!**
d **Ecoutez-moi!**
e **Dis la vérité!**



# Key verbs

In French, as in most languages, some verbs are used more frequently than others. These include verbs like **aimer** *to like*, **aller** *to go*, **donner** *to give*, **dire** *to say*, **manger** *to eat* and **penser** *to think*, which relate to basic human activity.

Some verbs are used very frequently because their grammatical uses extend beyond their fundamental meaning:

- **Devoir** *to have to*, **pouvoir** *to be able to* and **vouloir** *to want to*, known as modal verbs, are used with the infinitive of a second verb.
- **Être** *to be* and **avoir** *to have* are used with a past participle to form past tenses (pages 158–159).
- **Avoir** also features in many expressions that don't use the word *have* in English.
- **Faire** *to do/make* is used in a whole range of situations when it's not translated as *do* or *make*.

These are all irregular and written out in full in the verb tables.

Some common French verbs don't have a direct equivalent in English. Both **savoir** and **connaître** translate *to know*, but they're not at all interchangeable. **Savoir** means to know information and facts, and to know how to do something, whereas you use **connaître** when you're talking about knowing or being acquainted with a person or a place.

## modal verbs

**Devoir** *to have to*, **pouvoir** *to be able to* and **vouloir** *to want to*, are known as modal verbs. They don't impart much information on their own, so they're always followed by another verb (or sometimes a noun). All three verbs are irregular (pages 217, 238, 253) and they all behave in a similar way when followed by another verb.

- Verbs which follow a modal verb are always in the infinitive:
  **Tu dois changer à Lille.** *You have to change at Lille.*
  **Vous pouvez choisir.** *You can choose.*
  **Je veux aller au théâtre.** *I want to go to the theatre.*
  **Je peux sortir? Puis-je sortir?** *Can I go out?*
  **Elle n'a pas pu venir**. *She couldn't come.*

- Reflexive verbs change their reflexive pronoun to agree:
  **Je voudrais me reposer.** *I'd like to rest.*
  **Tu dois te lever tôt demain.** *You must get up early tomorrow.*
  **Nous devons nous dépêcher.** *We have to hurry.*

- When there are object pronouns, they go in front of the infinitive:
  **Je veux y aller.** *I want to go there.*
  **Vous pouvez m'aider?** *Can you help me?*
  **Je voudrais lui en donner.** *I'd like to give him some.*

- The modal verbs form their perfect tense and other compound tenses with **avoir**:
  **Je n'ai pas pu résister.** *I couldn't resist.*
  **Je n'ai pas voulu assister au séminaire.** *I didn't want to attend the seminar.*
  **Tu aurais dû me le dire**. *You should have told me.*

## devoir

**Devoir** has a non-modal meaning; it can mean *to owe*:
**Je vous dois combien?** *How much do I owe you?*
**Vous me devez cinquante euros**. *You owe me 50 euros.*
This meaning is entirely separate from its use as a modal verb, when it has the following range of English translations:

- *have to, must, should, am/is/are supposed to* – present tense:
  **Je dois rentrer.** *I have to go back home.*
  **Elle doit être chez son copain.** *She must be at her friend's house.*
  **Elle doit arriver ce soir.** *She's supposed to be arriving this evening./She should arrive this evening.*
  **Tu dois partir à quelle heure?** *What time do you have to leave?*

- *had to, was/were supposed to* – perfect and imperfect; *must have* – perfect:
  **J'ai dû louper l'émission.** *I had to miss the programme.*
  **Il a dû partir très tôt.** *He had to leave very early.*
  **J'ai dû le voir.** *I must have seen him.*
  **Je devais y aller avec eux.** *I was supposed to go there with them.*
  **Je devais rester à la maison toute la semaine.** *I had to stay at home all week.*
  **Si on devait choisir un mot ...** *If you had to choose one word...*

- *ought to, should* – conditional:
  **Vous devriez partir maintenant.** *You should leave now.*
  **Tu devrais lui téléphoner.** *You ought to phone her.*
  **Elle ne devrait pas avoir peur.** *She shouldn't be afraid.*

- *should have, ought to have* – conditional perfect:
  **J'aurais dû vous prévenir.** *I ought to have warned you.*
  **Vous n'auriez pas dû le faire.** *You shouldn't have done it.*

**Devoir** and **il faut** both mean *to have to*. **Devoir** implies a sense of obligation, while **falloir** is stronger and implies necessity:
**Il faut y aller./Il faut que tu y ailles.** *You must go there./You need to go there.*
**Il ne faut pas en parler.** *You/We mustn't speak about it.*
**Il a fallu partir de bonne heure.** *We had to leave early.*

## pouvoir

**Pouvoir** *to be able to* is a modal verb with a range of English translations:

- *can, may, might* – present tense:
  **Tu peux m'aider?** *Can you help me?*
  **On ne peut pas venir aujourd'hui.** *We can't come today.*
  **Il peut être absent.** *He may/might be absent.*
  **Je peux payer par carte de crédit?** *Can I pay by credit card?*
  **Je peux sortir?** *May I go out?*

- *could* – imperfect, perfect, conditional and subjunctive:
  **Je pouvais les aider.** *I could help them (was able to help).*
  **J'ai pu parler avec lui.** *I could speak/managed to speak to him.*
  **Je pourrais venir demain.** *I could come tomorrow.*
  **Je pourrais t'aider si tu veux.** *I could help you if you wish.*
  **Vous pourriez me dire ...?** *Could you tell me ...?*

- *could have, might have* – conditional perfect:
  **J'aurais pu t'aider.** *I could have helped you.*
  **Nous aurions pu venir hier.** *We could have come yesterday.*
  **Tu aurais pu te faire mal.** *You might have hurt yourself.*

- **Il se peut** means *it is possible*. It's followed by the subjunctive:
  **Il se peut qu'elle vienne.** *(It's possible) she might come.*

- If *can/could* has the meaning of knowing how to do something, you use **savoir** *to know (how to)* in French:
  **Il s'est cassé la jambe et ne peut pas jouer au foot.** *He's broken his leg and can't play football.*
  **Je sais jouer du piano.** *I can play the piano.*

- Verbs of seeing, hearing etc don't need to be preceded by **pouvoir**, where English has *can*:
  **Vous voyez ce bâtiment-là?** *Can you see that building?*
  **Je ne vous entends pas très bien.** *I can't hear you very well.*

- Sometimes **peut-être** *perhaps, maybe* is used with another verb to translate *may* or *might*:
  **Je vais peut-être le voir demain.** *I might go to see him tomorrow.*

## vouloir

**Vouloir** *to want* can be followed by a noun.
**Je veux/voudrais un café.** *I want/I'd like a coffee.*
**Nous voudrions une chambre à deux lits.** *We'd like a double room.*
**Je voulais une plus grande chambre.** *I wanted a bigger room.*

It can also be followed by another verb. Used in this way, it's a modal verb and it has a range of English translations:

- *want, will* – present:
  **Je ne veux pas rester ici.** *I don't want to stay here.*
  **Nous voulons visiter le musée.** *We want to visit the museum.*
  **Qu'est-ce que tu veux faire?** *What do you want to do?*
  **Voulez-vous signer ici?** *Will you/Would you like to sign here?*

- *wanted* – imperfect and perfect, with different meanings; *refused to* in the negative perfect:
  **Je voulais sortir.** *I wanted to go out* (and this might or might not have happened).
  **J'ai voulu sortir.** *I wanted to go out* (and this is what happened).
  **Je n'ai pas voulu sortir.** *I refused to go out.*

- *would like, would have liked* – conditional and conditional perfect:
  **Je voudrais voir le nouveau film.** *I'd like to see the new film.*
  **J'aurais voulu vivre dans les années vingt.** *I would like to have lived in the twenties.*

- *please* – imperative, very formal:
  **Veuillez attendre.** *Please wait.*
  **Veuillez m'excuser.** *Please excuse me.*

**Vouloir bien** means *to be glad/willing to*:
**Je veux bien le faire.** *I'll be glad to do it.*
**Il veut bien la voir, mais elle ne veut pas le voir.** *He's happy to see her, but she doesn't want to see him.*

**Vouloir dire** means *to mean*:
**Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire?** *What does that mean?*
**Que veut dire 'gaspiller'?** *What does 'gaspiller' mean?*

# impersonal verbs

Impersonal verbs are so called because they only have an *it* (**il**) form in the various tenses.

They include:

- **il y a** *there is, there are*:
  **Il y a un bon restaurant au centre ville.** *There's a good restaurant in the town centre.*
  **Il y a beaucoup de monde ici.** *There are a lot of people here.*
  **Il y a quelqu'un?** *Is anybody there?*
  **Non, il n'y avait personne.** *No, there was nobody there.*
  **Il doit y avoir une alternative.** *There must be an alternative.*

- weather verbs and expressions:
  **il pleut** *it's raining*; **il neige** *it's snowing*; **il gèle** *it's freezing*
  **il fait beau/mauvais/du vent** *it's fine/bad weather/windy*
  **Il a plu hier.** *It rained yesterday.*
  **J'éspère qu'il ne va pas pleuvoir.** *I hope it's not going to rain.*
  **Il a fait si beau!** *It was such beautiful weather!*

- **Il faut** from **falloir** *to have to, to be necessary*. It's used when it's clear who the subject is.
  **Il faut partir avant dix-huit heures.** *I/you/we have to leave before six pm.*
  **Il a fallu partir tôt.** *I/You/We had to leave early.*
  **Il faudrait payer à l'avance.** *You would have to pay in advance.*

  **Il faut** can also be used with a personal pronoun or it can be followed by a clause in the subjunctive (page 179):
  **Il me/te/nous faut partir tôt.** *I/You/We have to leave early.*
  **Il faut que nous partions tôt.** *We have to leave early.*
  **Il faudra que nous partions tôt.** *We will have to leave early.*

  **Il ne faut pas** doesn't mean *it isn't necessary*. It means *one must not*, or *you may not*:
  **Il ne faut pas entrer.** *You mustn't go in.*

  For *it isn't necessary*, you use **il n'est pas nécessaire de** or **il n'y a pas besoin de**.

- **Il vaut mieux** (from **valoir**) *it's/it would be better/best*:
  **Il vaut mieux partir.** *It would be better to leave.*
  **Il vaut mieux que tu partes.** *It would be better if you left.*
  **Il vaudrait mieux ne rien dire.** *It would be better to say nothing.*

- **il paraît que** *it appears (that)*, **il (me) semble que** *it seems (to me) (that)*, **on dirait que** *it looks as if* lit. *one would say that*:
  **Il paraît qu'elle est arrivée hier.** *It appears she arrived yesterday.*
  **Il me semble qu'il a peu d'amis.** *It seems to me that he has few friends.*
  **On dirait qu'il va neiger.** *It looks as if it's going to snow.*

- **il reste** *there is/are ... left*:
  **Il reste encore du pain.** *There's still some bread left.*
  **Il ne restait que deux tranches de jambon.** *There were only two slices of ham left.*

- **il manque** *there is/are not enough* lit. *is/are lacking*:
  **Il manque du lait.** *There's not enough milk.*
  **Il ne me manque pas d'idées.** *I'm not short of ideas.*

- **il suffit de** *you just need to* lit. *it's enough to*:
  **Il suffit de suivre la consigne.** *You just need to follow the instructions.*
  **Il suffit d'expliquer**. *You just need to explain.*

- Reflexive impersonal verbs include: **il s'agit de** *it's about/a question of*, **il se trouve que** *it just so happens that*, **il se peut que** *it's possible that*:
  **De quoi s'agit il?** *What's it about?*
  **Il ne s'agissait plus de son honnêteté.** *It was no longer a question of his honesty.*
  **Il se trouve que je ne l'ai pas vue.** *As it happens, I didn't see her.*
  **Il se peut qu'il le fasse.** *It's possible that he'll do it.*
  **Il se peut que je sois enceinte.** *It's possible that I'm pregnant./I might be pregnant.*

- Many impersonal expressions use **être** and start with **il est** (page 190).

## être

**Être** *to be* is the most used and the most irregular verb in French, as in English.

- As well as its basic use, **être** is used with a past participle to form the past tenses of certain verbs (page 159):
  **Il est arrivé en retard.** *He (has) arrived late.*
  **Elle est morte.** *She (has) died.*
  **Nous étions partis avant neuf heures.** *We had left before nine o'clock.*
  **Il sera parti en vacances.** *He will have gone on holiday.*
  **Ils seraient rentrés.** *They would have come back.*

- It's also used to form the passive:
  **Son visage était couvert.** *His face was covered.*
  **La maison a été rénovée.** *The house has been renovated.*

- **Il est** with an adjective creates an impersonal expression:
  **Il est nécessaire/essentiel.** *It's necessary/essential.*
  **Il est recommandé.** *It's recommended/advisable.*
  **Il est facile/difficile.** *It's easy/difficult.*
  **Il est possible/impossible.** *It's possible/impossible.*
  **Il est probable.** *It's probable.*
  **Il est utile/inutile.** *It's useful/pointless.*

  These impersonal expressions can be followed by **de** plus an infinitive:
  **Il est essentiel de savoir.** *It's essential to know.*
  **Il est inutile de s'inquiéter.** *It's pointless worrying.*
  But if the following verb has its own subject, they're followed by **que** even when English doesn't use *that*. Some expressions need the subjunctive (page 179):
  **Il est possible que ce soit vrai.** *It's possible that it is true.*
  **Il est probable que vous recevrez la lettre demain.** *It's likely that you'll receive the letter tomorrow.*
  **Il est essentiel qu'elle sache la vérité.** *It's essential that she knows the truth.*

  In impersonal phrases, the **il** doesn't refer to anything in particular. For guidelines on when to use **c'est** and when to use **il est**, see page 73.

## avoir

**Avoir** translates *to have* or *have got*.
**Nous avons trois enfants.** *We've got three children.*
**Je n'ai pas beaucoup de temps.** *I don't have much time.*
**Elle a mal à la tête.** *She has a headache.*
**Il a du flair pour les affaires.** *He has a flair for business.*
**Il a le béguin pour elle.** *He's got a crush on her.*
**Qu'est-ce que tu as?** *What's the matter?/What's your problem/complaint?*

It's used with a past participle to form past tenses (page 158):
**J'ai compris.** *I have understood.*
**Vous avez mangé?** *Have you eaten?*
**Elles avaient fini?** *Had they finished?*

**Avoir** also features in many expressions that don't use the word *have* in English. For example, **avoir lieu** means *to take place*, while **avoir besoin de** means *to need*. The following are some of the ways **avoir** is used:

- talking about age:
  **L'enfant a quel age?** *How old is the child?*
  **Il a huit ans.** *He's eight years old.*

- saying what you feel like physically:
  **avoir sommeil** *to feel sleepy*
  **avoir faim/soif** *to be hungry/thirsty*; **avoir chaud/froid** *to be hot/cold*
  **avoir mal au cœur, avoir des nausées** *to feel sick*
  **avoir le mal de mer/le mal de l'air** *to be seasick/airsick*
  **avoir le vertige** *to feel dizzy*

- saying what you feel like mentally:
  **avoir peur** *to be afraid*; **avoir honte** *to be ashamed*
  **avoir envie de** *to feel like*
  **avoir raison/tort** *to be right/wrong*
  **avoir de la compassion pour** *to sympathise with, to feel for*
  **avoir du respect pour** *to respect*

- everyday phrases:
  **avoir de la chance** *to be lucky*
  **avoir de bonnes intentions** *to mean well*
  **avoir de la patience avec** *to bear with*
  **avoir confiance en** *to put one's trust in, to rely on*

# faire

The basic translations of **faire** are *to do* and *to make*:
**Il n'y a rien à faire.** *There's nothing to do.*
**Qu'est-ce que tu fais?** *What are you doing?*
**Ils ont fait l'amour.** *They made love.*
**On a fait une erreur/une faute.** *We made a mistake.*
**faire la cuisine** *to do the cooking*
**faire la lessive** *to do the washing*
**faire de la recherche** *to do research*

It's also used in many other ways that don't have *do* or *make* in the English translation.

- It's used to talk about the weather:
  **Il fait beau/mauvais temps.** *It's fine/awful weather.*
  **Il fait du vent/du brouillard.** *It's windy/foggy.*
  **Il fait chaud/froid.** *It's hot/cold.*
  **Il fait trente degrés à l'ombre.** *It's 30 degrees in the shade.*

- It can translate *take* or *have*:
  **faire une pause** *to take a break*
  **faire une excursion** *to take a trip*
  **faire une sieste** *to have a nap*
  **faire la grasse matinée** *to have a lie-in*

- It's used for many sports and activities:
  **faire du sport** *to do/play sport*
  **faire une promenade** *to go for a walk*
  **faire de l'escalade** *to go climbing*
  **faire une randonnée** *to go hiking*
  **faire de l'équitation** *to go horseriding*
  **faire de la montgolfière** *to go hot air ballooning*
  **faire du ski** *to go skiing*
  **faire du ski nautique** *to go water-skiing*
  **faire du jogging** *to jog*
  **faire de la voile** *to sail*
  **faire de la planche à voile** *to windsurf*
  **faire de la planche à roulettes** *to skateboard*
  **faire de la planche à neige/faire du snowboard** *to snowboard*

**faire du canoë** *to go canoeing*
**faire du deltaplane** *to go hang-gliding*
**faire du saut à l'élastique** *to bungee jump*

- It's used before another verb in the infinitive to mean *have something done*:
  **J'ai fait nettoyer la voiture.** *I've had the car cleaned.*
  **Tu as fait réparer le pneu?** *Have you had the tyre repaired?*
  **Il a fait bâtir un garage.** *He's had a garage built.*
  **Nous avons fait agrandir la maison.** *We've had the house extended.*

- It has many other varied translations:
  **faire attention (à)** *to pay attention (to)*
  **faire l'imbécile** *to play the fool*
  **faire le malade** *to pretend to be ill*
  **faire des bêtises** *to get into mischief*
  **faire la connaissance de** *to meet (for the first time)*
  **faire du stop** *to hitch-hike*
  **faire la fête** *to party*
  **faire jour/nuit** *to be daylight/night-time*
  **faire la queue** *to queue*
  **faire le pont** *to make a long weekend of it*
  **faire les bagages** *to pack*
  **faire les courses/du shopping** *to go shopping*
  **faire la grève** *to go on strike*
  **faire un numéro de téléphone** *to dial a number*
  **faire des éxperiences** *to experiment*
  **faire justice soi-même** *to take the law into one's own hands*

- It also features in many phrases:
  **Ça ne fait rien.** *It doesn't matter.*
  **Ça fait combien?** *How much is that?*
  **Fais/faites voir.** *Show me.*
  **Pour ce que ça fait!** *For all the good it does!*
  **Ça me fait rire.** *That makes me laugh.*
  **Elle sait y faire.** *She's got the knack.*
  **Ça ne se fait pas.** *That's not the done thing.*
  **J'ai mieux à faire.** *I've got better things to do.*
  **Faites commes chez vous.** *Make yourself at home.*
  **faire d'une pierre deux coups** *to kill two birds with one stone*

# checkpoint 21

**1** Fill each gap with one of the following words: **avez, a, ai, fera, sont, ont, fait, faites, fais, être**

a **Le weekend je** ..... **de la planche à voile.**
b **Qu'est-ce que vous** ..... **? Vous lisez?**
c **Vous** ..... **besoin de quelque chose?**
d **Elles** ..... **arrivées hier.**
e **J'espère qu'il va** ..... **là demain.**
f **Mon fils** ..... **six ans.**
g **J'** ..... **mal aux dents.**
h **J'espère qu'il** ..... **beau demain.**
i **Il** ..... **du vent.**
j **Ils nous** ..... **téléphoné hier soir.**

**2** Rephrase these sentences using **Il faut que**:
Example: **Il me faut aller. → Il faut que j'aille.**

a **Il te faut partir.**
b **Il nous faut lui téléphoner.**
c **Il me faut faire les devoirs.**
d **Il vous faut vous lever tôt.**

**3** What word(s) are missing?

a ..... **aller au cinéma.** *I'd like to go to the cinema.*
b ..... **attendre.** *You* (**vous**) *ought to wait.*
c ..... **commencer?** *Do they* (f) *want to start?*
d ..... **téléphoné.** *I should have phoned.*
e **Est-ce qu'** ..... **nager ici?** *Can one swim here?*
f ..... **voir.** *I want to see.*
g ..... **jouer du violon?** *Can you* (**tu**) *play the violin?*
h ..... **payer.** *We could have paid.*
i ..... **m'aider?** *Can you* (**tu**) *help me?*
j ..... **partir maintenant.** *She must leave now.*

**4** When you're tired, which of these are you most likely to feel like doing: **faire du stop, faire les courses, faire la grasse matinée, faire de l'escalade?**

# Verbs followed by prepositions

French verbs are linked to other words in a sentence in various ways. They can be:

- followed directly by another verb. This second verb is always in the infinitive in French, even though in English it can be an infinitive, e.g. *to think*, *to work*, or a gerund, e.g. *thinking*, *working*:
  **Je veux voyager.** *I want to travel.*
  **J'aime voyager.** *I like travelling.*

- followed by **à** or **de** before the second verb. More often than not, the preposition has no equivalent in English:
  **continuer à voyager** *to continue travelling*
  **décider de voyager** *to decide to travel*

- followed by **à** + person + **de** + verb:
  **dire à quelqu'un d'entrer** *to tell (to) somebody to come in*

- followed directly by a noun:
  **inviter quelqu'un** *to invite somebody*
  **manger quelque chose** *to eat something*

- followed by **à** or **de** before the noun. There are also a few verbs that are followed by other prepositions:
  **parler à quelqu'un** *to talk to somebody*
  **parler de quelqu'un** *to talk of/about somebody*
  **entrer dans une maison** *to enter (into) a house*

  It's not always this straightforward because the preposition often has no equivalent in English or has an unexpected translation:
  **jouer au foot** *to play football*
  **remplir d'eau** *to fill with water*

## verbs followed by à

Some French verbs are always linked to the rest of the sentence by **à**. The most common are listed opposite.

- When these verbs are followed by another verb, this is always in the infinitive in French, whatever the English translation may be. Although there's no English equivalent for **à** with most verbs, it has a translation with a few:
  **Il voudrait renoncer à fumer.** *He'd like to give up smoking.*
  **Je n'arrive pas à fermer ma valise.** *I can't manage to close my suitcase.*
  **Je t'encourage à lire ce livre.** *I encourage you to read this book.*
  **Ce produit sert à enlever des taches.** *This product is used for getting rid of stains.*
  **Ils se sont amusés à participer au concours.** *They enjoyed taking part in the competition.*

  You can use **y**, meaning *it* in this instance (page 81), to replace the phrase introduced by **à**:
  **Il voudrait y renoncer.** *He'd like to give it up.*
  **Je n'y arrive pas.** *I can't manage to do it.*
  **Je t'y encourage.** *I encourage you to do it.*
  **Ce produit y sert.** *This product is used for it.*

- When these verbs are followed by a noun, **à** often has no equivalent in English or has an unexpected translation. **Le** or **les** after **à** combine with it to become **au** or **aux** (page 48):
  **Tu veux jouer au tennis?** *Do you want to play tennis?*
  **Il ressemble beaucoup à son grand-père.** *He looks a lot like his grandfather.*
  **Je me suis habitué aux lentilles de contact.** *I've got used to contact lenses.*

- When the object of these verbs is a pronoun rather than a noun, it's an indirect object pronoun (page 79) if it refers to a person and **y** when it refers to anything else:
  **J'ai téléphoné à Dominic.** *I've phoned Dominic.*
  **Je lui ai téléphoné.** *I've phoned him.*
  **Elle obéit à ses parents.** *She obeys her parents.*
  **Elle leur obéit.** *She obeys them.*
  **Je pense beaucoup à l'avenir.** *I think a lot about the future.*
  **J'y pense beaucoup.** *I think about it a lot.*

**acheter à** *to buy from*
**aider à** *to help to*
**s'amuser à** *to enjoy oneself doing*
**apprendre à** *to learn how to*
**arriver à** *to manage to, succeed in doing*
**assister à** *to attend*
**s'attendre à** *to expect to*
**avoir à** *to have to, be obliged to*
**chercher à** *to attempt to*
**commencer à** *to begin to*
**consentir à** *to consent to*
**consister à** *to consist in*
**continuer à** *to continue to*
**convenir à** *to suit, be suitable for*
**emprunter à** *to borrow from*
**encourager à** *to encourage s.o. to*
**enseigner à** *to teach s.o. to*
**s'habituer à** *to get used to*
**hésiter à** *to hesitate to*
**s'intéresser à** *to be interested in*
**inviter à** *to invite s.o. to*
**jouer à** *to play (a game or a sport)*
**se mettre à** *to start to, set about*
**obéir à** *to obey*
**obliger à** *to force, oblige s.o. to*
**parler à** *to talk to*
**penser à** *to think of/about*
**permettre à** *to permit*
**persister à** *to persist in*
**plaire à** *to please*
**se préparer à** *to prepare oneself to*
**promettre à** *to promise*
**réfléchir à** *to consider*
**renoncer à** *to give up*
**répondre à** *to answer*
**résister à** *to resist*
**ressembler à** *to resemble*
**réussir à** *to succeed in*
**servir à** *to be used for*
**tarder à** *to delay, be late in*
**téléphoner à** *to phone*
**tenir à** *to be keen to*

## verbs followed by de

Some French verbs are always linked to the rest of the sentence by **de**. The most common are listed opposite.

- When these verbs are followed by another verb, this is always in the infinitive in French, whatever the English translation may be. Although there's no English equivalent for **de** with most verbs, it has a translation with a few:
  **J'ai oublié de fermer la porte à clé.** *I've forgotten to lock the door.*
  **Je n'ai pas envie d'y aller.** *I don't feel like going (there).*
  **Elle a décidé d'y retourner.** *She's decided to go back (there).*
  **Je rêve d'habiter dans le sud de la France.** *I dream of living in the South of France.*
  **Elle refuse de travailler.** *She refuses to work.*

- When these verbs are followed by a noun, **de** is translated in a variety of ways or sometimes not translated at all. **Le** or **les** after **de** combine with it to become **du** or **des** (page 48):
  **Elle ne parle jamais de sa famille.** *She never talks about her family.*
  **Tu as besoin du CD?** *Do you need the CD?*
  **Il s'est aperçu des erreurs.** *He noticed the mistakes.*
  **Je l'ai rempli d'eau.** *I filled it with water.*

- To translate *it/them,* when referring to things rather than people, you replace **de** + noun with **en** (page 82):
  **Elle n'en parle jamais.** *She never talks about it/them.*
  **Tu en as besoin?** *Do you need it/them?*
  **Il s'en est aperçu.** *He noticed it/them.*

**accepter de** *to agree to, to accept*
**accuser de** *to accuse s.o. of*
**s'agir de** *to be a question of*
**s'apercevoir de** *to notice*
**s'approcher de** *to approach*
**s'arrêter de** *to stop*
**avoir besoin de** *to need*
**avoir envie de** *to feel like*
**avoir honte de** *to be ashamed of*
**avoir l'intention de** *to intend*
**avoir peur de** *to be afraid of*
**avoir raison de** *to be right to*
**avoir tort de** *to be wrong in*
**cesser de** *to stop*
**changer de** *to change*
**choisir de** *to choose to*
**conseiller de** *to advise s.o. to*
**convenir de** *to admit to, acknowledge*
**craindre de** *to fear*
**décider de** *to decide to*
**se dépêcher de** *to hurry to*
**dépendre de** *to depend on*
**empêcher de** *to prevent sth/s.o. from*
**en avoir marre de** *to be fed up with*
**essayer de** *to try to*
**s'étonner de** *to be surprised to/at*
**être sur le point de** *to be about to*
**s'excuser de** *to apologise for*
**se fatiguer de** *to get tired of*
**féliciter de** *to congratulate s.o. on*
**finir de** *to finish*
**se garder de** *to be careful not to*
**jouer de** *to play (an instrument)*
**jouir de** *to enjoy*
**manquer de** *to lack*
**se méfier de** *to distrust, be careful about*
**menacer de** *to threaten to*
**mériter de** *to deserve to*
**se moquer de** *to make fun of*
**s'occuper de** *to be busy with*
**offrir de** *to offer to*
**oublier de** *to forget to*
**parler de** *to talk about*
**penser de** *to think of, have an opinion about*
**persuader de** *to persuade s.o. to*
**se plaindre de** *to complain about*
**prier de** *to beg, request s.o. to*
**profiter de** *to make the most of*
**promettre de** *to promise to*
**proposer de** *to suggest*
**rappeler de** *to remind s.o. to*
**se rappeler de** *to remember to*
**refuser de** *to refuse to*
**regretter de** *to regret*
**remercier de** *to thank s.o. for*
**se rendre compte de** *to realise, be aware of*
**rêver de** *to dream of*
**rire de** *to laugh at*
**risquer de** *to risk*
**se servir de** *to make use of*
**se souvenir de** *to remember*
**terminer de** *to finish*
**se vanter de** *to boast about*
**venir de (faire)** *to have just (done)*

## verb + à + person + de + infinitive

Whereas in English you ask or tell someone to do something without a preposition, in French you ask or tell ***to*** them to do something:
**J'ai demandé à mon mari de m'aider.** *I asked my husband to help me.*
**Demande à ta mère de me téléphoner.** *Ask your mother to phone me.*
**Il a dit à Luc de s'en aller.** *He told Luc to go away.*

There are several verbs which behave in the same way:

**apprendre à qn* de** *to teach s.o. to*
**commander à qn de** *to order s.o. to*
**conseiller à qn de** *to advise s.o. to*
**défendre à qn de** *to ban s.o. from*
**demander à qn de** *to ask s.o. to*
**dire à qn de** *to tell s.o. to*
**interdire à qn de** *to forbid s.o. to, ban s.o. from*
**ordonner à qn de** *to order s.o. to*
**permettre à qn de** *to allow s.o. to*
**promettre à qn de** *to promise s.o. to*
**proposer à qn de** *to propose to s.o. that*
**recommander à qn de** *to recommend to s.o. that*
**suggérer à qn de** *to suggest to s.o. that*

***qn = quelqu'un** *someone*

**Je recommande à tout le monde d'étudier le français.** *I recommend that everyone study French.*
**Je conseillerais aux étudiants de répondre.** *I'd advise the students to reply.*
**J'ai promis à ta sœur de venir demain.** *I promised your sister I'd come tomorrow.*

To replace **à** + person with a pronoun, you use an indirect object pronoun (page 79):
**Tu peux lui demander d'attendre?** *Can you ask her to wait?*
**Je leur conseillerais de répondre.** *I'd advise them to reply.*
**Dis-lui de venir demain.** *Tell her to come tomorrow.*

## verb + dans, par, pour, en

A few verbs are followed by **dans**, **par**, **pour** or **en** + a noun or another verb:

- **commencer** *to start* and **finir/terminer** *to finish* can be followed by **par** *by* + an infinitive:
  **J'ai commencé par lire de courts romans.** *I started by reading short novels.*
  (compare this with **J'ai commencé à lire** *I started to read*)
  **Elle a fini par remercier le public.** *She finished by thanking the public.*
  (compare this with **Elle a fini de remercier le public** *She finished thanking the public*)

- **entrer dans** *to enter*
  **Nous sommes entrés dans la cathédrale.** *We entered the cathedral.*
  **La Turquie veut entrer dans l'Union européenne.** *Turkey wants to join* (lit. *enter*) *the European Union.*

- **avoir confiance en** *to trust*
  **Je n'ai plus confiance en lui.** *I don't trust him any more.*
  **Tu as confiance en son jugement?** *Do you trust his judgement?*

- **Pour** followed by a verb in the infinitive has the sense of *for, in order to*:
  **Nous travaillons pour vivre.** *We work in order to live.*
  **Il faut donner pour recevoir.** *You must give in order to receive.*
  **Je l'ai fait pour t'aider.** *I did it to help you.*
  **Cliquer ici pour imprimer la page.** *Click here to print the page.*

## verbs with no preposition in French

Although these verbs have a preposition before a noun in English, they don't need one in French – they have a direct object:

**attendre** *to wait* ***for***
**chercher** *to look* ***for***
**demander** *to ask* ***for***
**écouter** *to listen* ***to***
**payer** *to pay* ***for*** (can also be followed by **pour**)
**regarder** *to look* ***at***

**J'attends un de mes amis.** *I'm waiting for one of my friends.*
**Je cherche mon passeport.** *I'm looking for my passport.*
**J'ai demandé une bière.** *I've asked for a beer.*
**Moi, je paie les repas des autres.** *I'll pay for the others' meals.*
**Tu voudrais regarder les photos?** *Would you like to look at the photos?*

# checkpoint 22

**1** Does **à**, **de** or **d'** belong in the gap?

a **J'ai promis ..... venir.** *I've promised to come.*

b **Tu peux aider Robert ..... porter les valises?** *Can you help Robert to carry the suitcases?*

c **Elle a essayé ..... apprendre.** *She's tried to learn.*

d **Elle a honte ..... être pauvre.** *She's ashamed of being poor.*

e **Je voudrais apprendre ..... faire du ski.** *I'd like to learn to ski.*

f **Il s'est fatigué ..... attendre.** *He got tired of waiting.*

g **Tu as peur ..... sortir?** *Are you afraid of going out?*

h **Tu as raison ..... ne pas sortir.** *You're right not to go out.*

**2** To fill these gaps, you need the combination of preposition + *the*. Check with page 48 if you need to.

a **Je voudrais parler ..... directeur.** *I'd like to talk to the manager.*

b **Ça dépend ..... temps.** *It depends on the weather.*

c **Vous devriez répondre ..... lettre.** *You ought to reply to the letter.*

d **J'en ai marre ..... service ici.** *I'm fed up with the service here.*

e **Que penses-tu ..... film?** *What do you think of the film?*

f **Je m'intéresse ..... art moderne.** *I'm interested in modern art.*

g **Vous avez besoin ..... ciseaux?** *Do you need the scissors?*

h **Je me suis habitué ..... chaleur.** *I've got used to the heat.*

**3** Translate these into French.

**a** *They're* (m) *waiting for the train.*

**b** *I like playing tennis.*

**c** *She forgot to pay.*

**d** *We're about to leave.*

**e** *She's looking for her bag.*

**f** *Do you* (**tu**) *need any money?*

**g** *I've asked for a hundred euros.*

**h** *We hope to come back next year.*

# Verb tables

The following pages present 50 key verbs, which are listed on page 254 for easy reference. They include:

- **travailler** *to work*, **finir** *to finish* and **vendre** *to sell*, which provide the regular patterns for **-er** verbs, **-ir** verbs and **-re** verbs.
- the reflexive verb **se laver** *to get washed*, which is regular.
- **commencer** *to begin* and **manger** *to eat*, which illustrate the spelling changes that verbs with **c** or **g** before **-er** undergo in some tenses.
- **acheter** *to buy* and **appeler** *to call*, which illustrate the spelling changes that verbs with **e** or **é** as the vowel in the syllable before **-er** undergo in some tenses, and **employer** *to use*, which illustrates the spelling changes that verbs with **y** before the **-er** undergo in some tenses.
- key irregular verbs such as **être** *to be*, **avoir** *to have*, **aller** *to go* and the modal verbs **devoir** *to have to*, **pouvoir** *to be able to* and **vouloir** *to want to*.
- other irregular verbs such as **dire** *to say* and **prendre** *to take*, which provide the pattern for verbs that behave in the same way. These are listed underneath.

All 50 verbs are written out in all persons in the present, future, conditional, imperfect, past historic, perfect and present subjunctive.
The perfect tense shows you whether the verb takes **avoir** or **être** in the compound tenses. All you need then do to form the pluperfect (page 163), future perfect (page 164) and conditional perfect (page 165) is to change the tense of **avoir/être**.

## 1 acheter *to buy*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| j' | achète | achèterai | achèterais |
| tu | achètes | achèteras | achèterais |
| il/elle | achète | achètera | achèterait |
| nous | achetons | achèterons | achèterions |
| vous | achetez | achèterez | achèteriez |
| ils/elles | achètent | achèteront | achèteraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| j' | achetais | achetai | ai acheté |
| tu | achetais | achetas | as acheté |
| il/elle | achetait | acheta | a acheté |
| nous | achetions | achetâmes | avons acheté |
| vous | achetiez | achetâtes | avez acheté |
| ils/elles | achetaient | achetèrent | ont acheté |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| j' | achète |
| tu | achètes |
| il/elle | achète |
| nous | achetions |
| vous | achetiez |
| ils/elles | achètent |

present participle **achetant**

past participle **acheté**

imperative **achète, achetons, achetez**

Verbs where **e** or **é** change to **è** include **amener** *to bring*, **emmener** *to take*, **espérer** *to hope*, **geler** *to freeze*, **se lever** *to get up*, **préférer** *to prefer*.

## 2 aller *to go*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | vais | irai | irais |
| tu | vas | iras | irais |
| il/elle | va | ira | irait |
| nous | allons | irons | irions |
| vous | allez | irez | iriez |
| ils/elles | vont | iront | iraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | allais | allai | suis allé(e) |
| tu | allais | allas | es allé(e) |
| il/elle | allait | alla | est allé(e) |
| nous | allions | allâmes | sommes allé(e)s |
| vous | alliez | allâtes | êtes allé(e)(s) |
| ils/elles | allaient | allèrent | sont allé(e)s |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| j' | aille |
| tu | ailles |
| il/elle | aille |
| nous | allions |
| vous | alliez |
| ils/elles | aillent |

present participle **allant**

past participle **allé**

imperative **va** (**vas** before **y**), **allons**, **allez**

## 3 appeler *to call*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| j' | appelle | appellerai | appellerais |
| tu | appelles | appelleras | appellerais |
| il/elle | appelle | appellera | appellerait |
| nous | appelons | appellerons | appellerions |
| vous | appelez | appellerez | appelleriez |
| ils/elles | appellent | appelleront | appelleraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| j' | appelais | appelai | ai appelé |
| tu | appelais | appelas | as appelé |
| il/elle | appelait | appela | a appelé |
| nous | appelions | appelâmes | avons appelé |
| vous | appeliez | appelâtes | avez appelé |
| ils/elles | appelaient | appelèrent | ont appelé |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| j' | appelle |
| tu | appelles |
| il/elle | appelle |
| nous | appelions |
| vous | appeliez |
| ils/elles | appellent |

present participle **appelant**

past participle **appelé**

imperative **appelle, appelons, appelez**

**Épeler** *to spell*, **jeter** *to throw*, **rappeler** *to remind*, **s'appeler** *to be called* also double the consonant before **-er** in some persons and tenses

## 4 s'asseoir *to sit down*

There are two ways of conjugating this verb in the present tense. The first of the two forms is the most common.

| | present | future |
|---|---|---|
| je | m'assieds/assois | m'assiérai |
| tu | t'assieds/assois | t'assiéras |
| il/elle | s'assied/assoit | s'assiéra |
| nous | nous asseyons/assoyons | nous assiérons |
| vous | vous asseyez/assoyez | vous assiérez |
| ils/elles | s'asseyent/assoient | s'assiéront |

| | conditional | imperfect | past historic |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | m'assiérais | m'asseyais | m'assis |
| tu | t'assiérais | t'asseyais | t'assis |
| il/elle | s'assiérait | s'asseyait | s'assit |
| nous | nous assiérions | nous asseyions | nous assîmes |
| vous | vous assiériez | vous asseyiez | vous assîtes |
| ils/elles | s'assiéraient | s'asseyaient | s'assirent |

| | perfect | present subjunctive |
|---|---|---|
| je | me suis assis(e) | m'asseye |
| tu | t'es assis(e) | t'asseyes |
| il/elle | s'est assis(e) | s'asseye |
| nous | nous sommes assis(es) | nous asseyions |
| vous | vous êtes assis(e)(s) | vous asseyiez |
| ils/elles | se sont assis(es) | s'asseyent |

present participle **s'asseyant**

past participle **assis**

imperative **assieds-toi, asseyons-nous, asseyez-vous**

## 5 avoir *to have*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| j' | ai | aurai | aurais |
| tu | as | auras | aurais |
| il/elle | a | aura | aurait |
| nous | avons | aurons | aurions |
| vous | avez | aurez | auriez |
| ils/elles | ont | auront | auraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| j' | avais | eus | ai eu |
| tu | avais | eus | as eu |
| il/elle | avait | eut | a eu |
| nous | avions | eûmes | avons eu |
| vous | aviez | eûtes | avez eu |
| ils/elles | avaient | eurent | ont eu |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| j' | aie |
| tu | aies |
| il/elle | ait |
| nous | ayons |
| vous | ayez |
| ils/elles | aient |

present participle **ayant**

past participle **eu**

imperative **aie, ayons, ayez**

## 6 battre *to beat*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | **bats** | **battrai** | **battrais** |
| tu | **bats** | **battras** | **battrais** |
| il/elle | **bat** | **battra** | **battrait** |
| nous | **battons** | **battrons** | **battrions** |
| vous | **battez** | **battrez** | **battriez** |
| ils/elles | **battent** | **battront** | **battraient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | **battais** | **battis** | **ai battu** |
| tu | **battais** | **battis** | **as battu** |
| il/elle | **battait** | **battit** | **a battu** |
| nous | **battions** | **battîmes** | **avons battu** |
| vous | **battiez** | **battîtes** | **avez battu** |
| ils/elles | **battaient** | **battirent** | **ont battu** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | **batte** |
| tu | **battes** |
| il/elle | **batte** |
| nous | **battions** |
| vous | **battiez** |
| ils/elles | **battent** |

present participle **battant**

past participle **battu**

imperative **bats, battons, battez**

## 7 boire *to drink*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | **bois** | **boirai** | **boirais** |
| tu | **bois** | **boiras** | **boirais** |
| il/elle | **boit** | **boira** | **boirait** |
| nous | **buvons** | **boirons** | **boirions** |
| vous | **buvez** | **boirez** | **boiriez** |
| ils/elles | **boivent** | **boiront** | **boiraient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | **buvais** | **bus** | **ai bu** |
| tu | **buvais** | **bus** | **as bu** |
| il/elle | **buvait** | **but** | **a bu** |
| nous | **buvions** | **bûmes** | **avons bu** |
| vous | **buviez** | **bûtes** | **avez bu** |
| ils/elles | **buvaient** | **burent** | **ont bu** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | **boive** |
| tu | **boives** |
| il/elle | **boive** |
| nous | **buvions** |
| vous | **buviez** |
| ils/elles | **boivent** |

present participle **buvant**

past participle **bu**

imperative **bois, buvons, buvez**

## 8 commencer *to begin*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je** | **commence** | **commencerai** | **commencerais** |
| **tu** | **commences** | **commenceras** | **commencerais** |
| **il/elle** | **commence** | **commencera** | **commencerait** |
| **nous** | **commençons** | **commencerons** | **commencerions** |
| **vous** | **commencez** | **commencerez** | **commenceriez** |
| **ils/elles** | **commencent** | **commenceront** | **commenceraient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je/j'** | **commençais** | **commençai** | **ai commencé** |
| **tu** | **commençais** | **commenças** | **as commencé** |
| **il/elle** | **commençait** | **commença** | **a commencé** |
| **nous** | **commencions** | **commençâmes** | **avons commencé** |
| **vous** | **commenciez** | **commençâtes** | **avez commencé** |
| **ils/elles** | **commençaient** | **commencèrent** | **ont commencé** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| **je** | **commence** |
| **tu** | **commences** |
| **il/elle** | **commence** |
| **nous** | **commencions** |
| **vous** | **commenciez** |
| **ils/elles** | **commencent** |

present participle **commençant**

past participle **commencé**

imperative **commence, commençons, commencez**

Verbs where **c** changes to **ç** include **annoncer** *to announce*, **avancer** *to advance*, **lancer** *to throw*, **menacer** *to threaten*, **pincer** *to pinch*, **rincer** *to rinse*.

## 11 courir *to run*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | cours | courrai | courrais |
| tu | cours | courras | courrais |
| il/elle | court | courra | courrait |
| nous | courons | courrons | courrions |
| vous | courez | courrez | courriez |
| ils/elles | courent | courront | courraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | courais | courus | ai couru |
| tu | courais | courus | as couru |
| il/elle | courait | courut | a couru |
| nous | courions | courûmes | avons couru |
| vous | couriez | courûtes | avez couru |
| ils/elles | couraient | coururent | ont couru |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | coure |
| tu | coures |
| il/elle | coure |
| nous | courions |
| vous | couriez |
| ils/elles | courent |

present participle **courant**

past participle **couru**

imperative **cours, courons, courez**

## 12 craindre *to fear*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | crains | craindrai | craindrais |
| tu | crains | craindras | craindrais |
| il/elle | craint | craindra | craindrait |
| nous | craignons | craindrons | craindrions |
| vous | craignez | craindrez | craindriez |
| ils/elles | craignent | craindront | craindraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | craignais | craignis | ai craint |
| tu | craignais | craignis | as craint |
| il/elle | craignait | craignit | a craint |
| nous | craignions | craignîmes | avons craint |
| vous | craigniez | craignîtes | avez craint |
| ils/elles | craignaient | craignirent | ont craint |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | craigne |
| tu | craignes |
| il/elle | craigne |
| nous | craignions |
| vous | craigniez |
| ils/elles | craignent |

present participle **craignant**

past participle **craint**

imperative **crains, craignons, craignez**

Verbs that follow the pattern of **craindre** include **se plaindre** *to complain*.

## 13 **croire** *to believe*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je** | **crois** | **croirai** | **croirais** |
| **tu** | **crois** | **croiras** | **croirais** |
| **il/elle** | **croit** | **croira** | **croirait** |
| **nous** | **croyons** | **croirons** | **croirions** |
| **vous** | **croyez** | **croirez** | **croiriez** |
| **ils/elles** | **croient** | **croiront** | **croiraient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je/j'** | **croyais** | **crus** | **ai cru** |
| **tu** | **croyais** | **crus** | **as cru** |
| **il/elle** | **croyait** | **crut** | **a cru** |
| **nous** | **croyions** | **crûmes** | **avons cru** |
| **vous** | **croyiez** | **crûtes** | **avez cru** |
| **ils/elles** | **croyaient** | **crurent** | **ont cru** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| **je** | **croie** |
| **tu** | **croies** |
| **il/elle** | **croie** |
| **nous** | **croyions** |
| **vous** | **croyiez** |
| **ils/elles** | **croient** |

present participle **croyant**

past participle **cru**

imperative **crois, croyons, croyez**

## 14 devoir *to have to*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | dois | devrai | devrais |
| tu | dois | devras | devrais |
| il/elle | doit | devra | devrait |
| nous | devons | devrons | devrions |
| vous | devez | devrez | devriez |
| ils/elles | doivent | devront | devraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | devais | dus | ai dû |
| tu | devais | dus | as dû |
| il/elle | devait | dut | a dû |
| nous | devions | dûmes | avons dû |
| vous | deviez | dûtes | avez dû |
| ils/elles | devaient | durent | ont dû |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | doive |
| tu | doives |
| il/elle | doive |
| nous | devions |
| vous | deviez |
| ils/elles | doivent |

present participle **devant**

past participle **dû**

imperative **dois, devons, devez**

## 15 dire *to say*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | dis | dirai | dirais |
| tu | dis | diras | dirais |
| il/elle | dit | dira | dirait |
| nous | disons | dirons | dirions |
| vous | dites | direz | diriez |
| ils/elles | disent | diront | diraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | disais | dis | ai dit |
| tu | disais | dis | as dit |
| il/elle | disait | dit | a dit |
| nous | disions | dîmes | avons dit |
| vous | disiez | dîtes | avez dit |
| ils/elles | disaient | dirent | ont dit |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | dise |
| tu | dises |
| il/elle | dise |
| nous | disions |
| vous | disiez |
| ils/elles | disent |

present participle **disant**

past participle **dit**

imperative **dis, disons, dites**

Verbs which follow the same pattern as **dire** include **contredire** *to contradict*, **interdire** *to forbid* and **prédire** *to predict*.

## 16 dormir *to sleep*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | dors | dormirai | dormirais |
| tu | dors | dormiras | dormirais |
| il/elle | dort | dormira | dormirait |
| nous | dormons | dormirons | dormirions |
| vous | dormez | dormirez | dormiriez |
| ils/elles | dorment | dormiront | dormiraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | dormais | dormis | ai dormi |
| tu | dormais | dormis | as dormi |
| il/elle | dormait | dormit | a dormi |
| nous | dormions | dormîmes | avons dormi |
| vous | dormiez | dormîtes | avez dormi |
| ils/elles | dormaient | dormirent | ont dormi |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | dorme |
| tu | dormes |
| il/elle | dorme |
| nous | dormions |
| vous | dormiez |
| ils/elles | dorment |

present participle **dormant**

past participle **dormi**

imperative **dors, dormons, dormez**

## 17 **écrire** *to write*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| j' | **écris** | **écrirai** | **écrirais** |
| tu | **écris** | **écriras** | **écrirais** |
| il/elle | **écrit** | **écrira** | **écrirait** |
| nous | **écrivons** | **écrirons** | **écririons** |
| vous | **écrivez** | **écrirez** | **écririez** |
| ils/elles | **écrivent** | **écriront** | **écriraient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| j' | **écrivais** | **écrivis** | **ai écrit** |
| tu | **écrivais** | **écrivis** | **as écrit** |
| il/elle | **écrivait** | **écrivit** | **a écrit** |
| nous | **écrivions** | **écrivîmes** | **avons écrit** |
| vous | **écriviez** | **écrivîtes** | **avez écrit** |
| ils/elles | **écrivaient** | **écrivirent** | **ont écrit** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| j' | **écrive** |
| tu | **écrives** |
| il/elle | **écrive** |
| nous | **écrivions** |
| vous | **écriviez** |
| ils/elles | **écrivent** |

present participle **écrivant**

past participle **écrit**

imperative **écris, écrivons, écrivez**

Verbs which follow the same pattern as **écrire** include **décrire** *to describe*.

## 18 employer *to use*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| j' | **emploie** | **emploierai** | **emploierais** |
| tu | **emploies** | **emploieras** | **emploierais** |
| il/elle | **emploie** | **emploiera** | **emploierait** |
| nous | **employons** | **emploierons** | **emploierions** |
| vous | **employez** | **emploierez** | **emploieriez** |
| ils/elles | **emploient** | **emploieront** | **emploieraient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| j' | **employais** | **employai** | **ai employé** |
| tu | **employais** | **employas** | **as employé** |
| il/elle | **employait** | **employa** | **a employé** |
| nous | **employions** | **employâmes** | **avons employé** |
| vous | **employiez** | **employâtes** | **avez employé** |
| ils/elles | **employaient** | **employèrent** | **ont employé** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| j' | **emploie** |
| tu | **emploies** |
| il/elle | **emploie** |
| nous | **employions** |
| vous | **employiez** |
| ils/elles | **emploient** |

present participle **employant**

past participle **employé**

imperative **emploie, employons, employez**

Verbs which follow the same pattern include **appuyer** *to press*, **s'ennuyer** *to be bored*, **essuyer** *to wipe*, **nettoyer** *to clean* and **(se) noyer** *to drown*.

## 19 envoyer *to send*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| j' | envoie | enverrai | enverrais |
| tu | envoies | enverras | enverrais |
| il/elle | envoie | enverra | enverrait |
| nous | envoyons | enverrons | enverrions |
| vous | envoyez | enverrez | enverriez |
| ils/elles | envoient | enverront | enverraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| j' | envoyais | envoyai | ai envoyé |
| tu | envoyais | envoyas | as envoyé |
| il/elle | envoyait | envoya | a envoyé |
| nous | envoyions | envoyâmes | avons envoyé |
| vous | envoyiez | envoyâtes | avez envoyé |
| ils/elles | envoyaient | envoyèrent | ont envoyé |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| j' | envoie |
| tu | envoies |
| il/elle | envoie |
| nous | envoyions |
| vous | envoyiez |
| ils/elles | envoient |

present participle **envoyant**

past participle **envoyé**

imperative **envoie, envoyons, envoyez**

## 20 être *to be*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | suis | serai | serais |
| tu | es | seras | serais |
| il/elle | est | sera | serait |
| nous | sommes | serons | serions |
| vous | êtes | serez | seriez |
| ils/elles | sont | seront | seraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | étais | fus | ai été |
| tu | étais | fus | as été |
| il/elle | était | fut | a été |
| nous | étions | fûmes | avons été |
| vous | étiez | fûtes | avez été |
| ils/elles | étaient | furent | ont été |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | sois |
| tu | sois |
| il/elle | soit |
| nous | soyons |
| vous | soyez |
| ils/elles | soient |

present participle **étant**

past participle **été**

imperative **sois, soyons, soyez**

## 21 faire *to do, make*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | fais | ferai | ferais |
| tu | fais | feras | ferais |
| il/elle | fait | fera | ferait |
| nous | faisons | ferons | ferions |
| vous | faites | ferez | feriez |
| ils/elles | font | feront | feraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | faisais | fis | ai fait |
| tu | faisais | fis | as fait |
| il/elle | faisait | fit | a fait |
| nous | faisions | fîmes | avons fait |
| vous | faisiez | fîtes | avez fait |
| ils/elles | faisaient | firent | ont fait |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | fasse |
| tu | fasses |
| il/elle | fasse |
| nous | fassions |
| vous | fassiez |
| ils/elles | fassent |

present participle **faisant**

past participle **fait**

imperative **fais, faisons, faites**

## 22 falloir *to be necessary*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| il | faut | faudra | faudrait |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| il | fallait | fallut | a fallu |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| il | faille |

## 23 finir *to finish*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | finis | finirai | finirais |
| tu | finis | finiras | finirais |
| il/elle | finit | finira | finirait |
| nous | finissons | finirons | finirions |
| vous | finissez | finirez | finiriez |
| ils/elles | finissent | finiront | finiraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | finissais | finis | ai fini |
| tu | finissais | finis | as fini |
| il/elle | finissait | finit | a fini |
| nous | finissions | finîmes | avons fini |
| vous | finissiez | finîtes | avez fini |
| ils/elles | finissaient | finirent | ont fini |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | finisse |
| tu | finisses |
| il/elle | finisse |
| nous | finissions |
| vous | finissiez |
| ils/elles | finissent |

present participle **finissant**

past participle **fini**

imperative **finis, finissons, finissez**

## 24 se laver *to get washed*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | me lave | me laverai | me laverais |
| tu | te laves | te laveras | te laverais |
| il/elle | se lave | se lavera | se laverait |
| nous | nous lavons | nous laverons | nous laverions |
| vous | vous lavez | vous laverez | vous laveriez |
| ils/elles | se lavent | se laveront | se laveraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | me lavais | me lavai | me suis lavé(e) |
| tu | te lavais | te lavas | t'es lavé(e) |
| il/elle | se lavait | se lava | s'est lavé(e) |
| nous | nous lavions | nous lavâmes | nous sommes lavé(e)s |
| vous | vous laviez | vous lavâtes | vous êtes lavé(e)(s) |
| ils/elles | se lavaient | se lavèrent | se sont lavé(e)s |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | me lave |
| tu | te laves |
| il/elle | se lave |
| nous | nous lavions |
| vous | vous laviez |
| ils/elles | se lavent |

present participle **(se) lavant**

past participle **lavé**

imperative **lave-toi, lavons-nous, lavez-vous**

## 25 lire *to read*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | lis | lirai | lirais |
| tu | lis | liras | lirais |
| il/elle | lit | lira | lirait |
| nous | lisons | lirons | lirions |
| vous | lisez | lirez | liriez |
| ils/elles | lisent | liront | liraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | lisais | lus | ai lu |
| tu | lisais | lus | as lu |
| il/elle | lisait | lut | a lu |
| nous | lisions | lûmes | avons lu |
| vous | lisiez | lûtes | avez lu |
| ils/elles | lisaient | lurent | ont lu |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | lise |
| tu | lises |
| il/elle | lise |
| nous | lisions |
| vous | lisiez |
| ils/elles | lisent |

present participle **lisant**

past participle **lu**

imperative **lis, lisons, lisez**

Verbs which follow the same pattern as **lire** include **élire** *to elect*.

## 26 manger *to eat*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | mange | mangerai | mangerais |
| tu | manges | mangeras | mangerais |
| il/elle | mange | mangera | mangerait |
| nous | mangeons | mangerons | mangerions |
| vous | mangez | mangerez | mangeriez |
| ils/elles | mangent | mangeront | mangeraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | mangeais | mangeai | ai mangé |
| tu | mangeais | mangeas | as mangé |
| il/elle | mangeait | mangea | a mangé |
| nous | mangions | mangeâmes | avons mangé |
| vous | mangiez | mangeâtes | avez mangé |
| ils/elles | mangeaient | mangèrent | ont mangé |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | mange |
| tu | manges |
| il/elle | mange |
| nous | mangions |
| vous | mangiez |
| ils/elles | mangent |

present participle **mangeant**

past participle **mangé**

imperative **mange, mangeons, mangez**

Verbs which add **e** after **g** as **manger** include **arranger** *to arrange*, **bouger** *to move*, **partager** *to share*, **protéger** *to protect* and **soulager** *to relieve*.

## 27 **mettre** *to put*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je** | **mets** | **mettrai** | **mettrais** |
| **tu** | **mets** | **mettras** | **mettrais** |
| **il/elle** | **met** | **mettra** | **mettrait** |
| **nous** | **mettons** | **mettrons** | **mettrions** |
| **vous** | **mettez** | **mettrez** | **mettriez** |
| **ils/elles** | **mettent** | **mettront** | **mettraient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je/j'** | **mettais** | **mis** | **ai mis** |
| **tu** | **mettais** | **mis** | **as mis** |
| **il/elle** | **mettait** | **mit** | **a mis** |
| **nous** | **mettions** | **mîmes** | **avons mis** |
| **vous** | **mettiez** | **mîtes** | **avez mis** |
| **ils/elles** | **mettaient** | **mirent** | **ont mis** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| **je** | **mette** |
| **tu** | **mettes** |
| **il/elle** | **mette** |
| **nous** | **mettions** |
| **vous** | **mettiez** |
| **ils/elles** | **mettent** |

present participle **mettant**

past participle **mis**

imperative **mets, mettons, mettez**

Verbs which follow the pattern of **mettre** include **admettre** *to admit*, **permettre** *to permit*, **promettre** *to promise* and **transmettre** *to transmit*.

## 28 mourir *to die*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | meurs | mourrai | mourrais |
| tu | meurs | mourras | mourrais |
| il/elle | meurt | mourra | mourrait |
| nous | mourons | mourrons | mourrions |
| vous | mourez | mourrez | mourriez |
| ils/elles | meurent | mourront | mourraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | mourais | mourus | suis mort(e) |
| tu | mourais | mourus | es mort(e) |
| il/elle | mourait | mourut | est mort(e) |
| nous | mourions | mourûmes | sommes mort(e)s |
| vous | mouriez | mourûtes | êtes mort(e)(s) |
| ils/elles | mouraient | moururent | sont mort(e)s |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | meure |
| tu | meures |
| il/elle | meure |
| nous | mourions |
| vous | mouriez |
| ils/elles | meurent |

present participle **mourant**

past participle **mort**

imperative **meurs, mourons, mourez**

## 29 naître *to be born*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | nais | naîtrai | naîtrais |
| tu | nais | naîtras | naîtrais |
| il/elle | naît | naîtra | naîtrait |
| nous | naissons | naîtrons | naîtrions |
| vous | naissez | naîtrez | naîtriez |
| ils/elles | naissent | naîtront | naîtraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | naissais | naquis | suis né(e) |
| tu | naissais | naquis | es né(e) |
| il/elle | naissait | naquit | est né(e) |
| nous | naissions | naquîmes | sommes né(e)s |
| vous | naissiez | naquîtes | êtes né(e)(s) |
| ils/elles | naissaient | naquirent | sont né(e)s |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | naisse |
| tu | naisses |
| il/elle | naisse |
| nous | naissions |
| vous | naissiez |
| ils/elles | naissent |

present participle **naissant**

past participle **né**

imperative **nais, naissons, naissez**

## 30 ouvrir *to open*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| j' | **ouvre** | **ouvrirai** | **ouvrirais** |
| tu | **ouvres** | **ouvriras** | **ouvrirais** |
| il/elle | **ouvre** | **ouvrira** | **ouvrirait** |
| nous | **ouvrons** | **ouvrirons** | **ouvririons** |
| vous | **ouvrez** | **ouvrirez** | **ouvririez** |
| ils/elles | **ouvrent** | **ouvriront** | **ouvriraient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| j' | **ouvrais** | **ouvris** | **ai ouvert** |
| tu | **ouvrais** | **ouvris** | **as ouvert** |
| il/elle | **ouvrait** | **ouvrit** | **a ouvert** |
| nous | **ouvrions** | **ouvrîmes** | **avons ouvert** |
| vous | **ouvriez** | **ouvrîtes** | **avez ouvert** |
| ils/elles | **ouvraient** | **ouvrirent** | **ont ouvert** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| j' | **ouvre** |
| tu | **ouvres** |
| il/elle | **ouvre** |
| nous | **ouvrions** |
| vous | **ouvriez** |
| ils/elles | **ouvrent** |

present participle **ouvrant**

past participle **ouvert**

imperative **ouvre, ouvrons, ouvrez**

Verbs which follow the same pattern as **ouvrir** include **couvrir** *to cover*, **découvrir** *to discover*, **offrir** *to offer* and **souffrir** *to suffer*.

## 31 partir *to leave*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | pars | partirai | partirais |
| tu | pars | partiras | partirais |
| il/elle | part | partira | partirait |
| nous | partons | partirons | partirions |
| vous | partez | partirez | partiriez |
| ils/elles | partent | partiront | partiraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | partais | partis | suis parti(e) |
| tu | partais | partis | es parti(e) |
| il/elle | partait | partit | est parti(e) |
| nous | partions | partîmes | sommes parti(e)s |
| vous | partiez | partîtes | êtes parti(e)(s) |
| ils/elles | partaient | partirent | sont parti(e)s |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | parte |
| tu | partes |
| il/elle | parte |
| nous | partions |
| vous | partiez |
| ils/elles | partent |

present participle **partant**

past participle **parti**

imperative **pars, partons, partez**

Verbs which follow the same pattern include **sortir** *to go out*. **Mentir** *to lie* and **sentir** *to feel* have the same endings but take **avoir** not **être**.

## 32 peindre *to paint*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | peins | peindrai | peindrais |
| tu | peins | peindras | peindrais |
| il/elle | peint | peindra | peindrait |
| nous | peignons | peindrons | peindrions |
| vous | peignez | peindrez | peindriez |
| ils/elles | peignent | peindront | peindraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | peignais | peignis | ai peint |
| tu | peignais | peignis | as peint |
| il/elle | peignait | peignit | a peint |
| nous | peignions | peignîmes | avons peint |
| vous | peigniez | peignîtes | avez peint |
| ils/elles | peignaient | peignirent | ont peint |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | peigne |
| tu | peignes |
| il/elle | peigne |
| nous | peignions |
| vous | peigniez |
| ils/elles | peignent |

present participle **peignant**

past participle **peint**

imperative **peins, peignons, peignez**

Verbs which follow the same pattern as **peindre** include **atteindre** *to achieve, to reach* and **éteindre** *to extinguish/to switch off.*

## 33 **plaire** *to please*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je** | **plais** | **plairai** | **plairais** |
| **tu** | **plais** | **plairas** | **plairais** |
| **il/elle** | **plaît** | **plaira** | **plairait** |
| **nous** | **plaisons** | **plairons** | **plairions** |
| **vous** | **plaisez** | **plairez** | **plairiez** |
| **ils/elles** | **plaisent** | **plairont** | **plairaient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je/j'** | **plaisais** | **plus** | **ai plu** |
| **tu** | **plaisais** | **plus** | **as plu** |
| **il/elle** | **plaisait** | **plut** | **a plu** |
| **nous** | **plaisions** | **plûmes** | **avons plu** |
| **vous** | **plaisiez** | **plûtes** | **avez plu** |
| **ils/elles** | **plaisaient** | **plurent** | **ont plu** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| **je** | **plaise** |
| **tu** | **plaises** |
| **il/elle** | **plaise** |
| **nous** | **plaisions** |
| **vous** | **plaisiez** |
| **ils/elles** | **plaisent** |

present participle **plaisant**

past participle **plu**

imperative **plais, plaisons, plaisez**

Verbs which follow the same pattern as **plaire** include **se taire** *to keep quiet.*

## 34 pleuvoir *to rain*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| il | **pleut** | **pleuvra** | **pleuvrait** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| il | **pleuvait** | **plut** | **a plu** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| il | **pleuve** |

present participle **pleuvant**

past participle **plu**

## 35 pouvoir *to be able*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | peux | pourrai | pourrais |
| tu | peux | pourras | pourrais |
| il/elle | peut | pourra | pourrait |
| nous | pouvons | pourrons | pourrions |
| vous | pouvez | pourrez | pourriez |
| ils/elles | peuvent | pourront | pourraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | pouvais | pus | ai pu |
| tu | pouvais | pus | as pu |
| il/elle | pouvait | put | a pu |
| nous | pouvions | pûmes | avons pu |
| vous | pouviez | pûtes | avez pu |
| ils/elles | pouvaient | purent | ont pu |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | puisse |
| tu | puisses |
| il/elle | puisse |
| nous | puissions |
| vous | puissiez |
| ils/elles | puissent |

present participle **pouvant**

past participle **pu**

## 36 prendre *to take*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | prends | prendrai | prendrais |
| tu | prends | prendras | prendrais |
| il/elle | prend | prendra | prendrait |
| nous | prenons | prendrons | prendrions |
| vous | prenez | prendrez | prendriez |
| ils/elles | prennent | prendront | prendraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | prenais | pris | ai pris |
| tu | prenais | pris | as pris |
| il/elle | prenait | prit | a pris |
| nous | prenions | prîmes | avons pris |
| vous | preniez | prîtes | avez pris |
| ils/elles | prenaient | prirent | ont pris |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | prenne |
| tu | prennes |
| il/elle | prenne |
| nous | prenions |
| vous | preniez |
| ils/elles | prennent |

present participle **prenant**

past participle **pris**

imperative **prends, prenons, prenez**

Verbs which follow the pattern of **prendre** include **apprendre** *to learn* and **comprendre** *to understand*.

## 37 recevoir *to receive*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | reçois | recevrai | recevrais |
| tu | reçois | recevras | recevrais |
| il/elle | reçoit | recevra | recevra |
| nous | recevons | recevrons | recevrions |
| vous | recevez | recevrez | recevriez |
| ils/elles | reçoivent | recevront | recevraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | recevais | reçus | ai reçu |
| tu | recevais | reçus | as reçu |
| il/elle | recevait | reçut | a reçu |
| nous | recevions | reçûmes | avons reçu |
| vous | receviez | reçûtes | avez reçu |
| ils/elles | recevaient | reçurent | ont reçu |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | reçoive |
| tu | reçoives |
| il/elle | reçoive |
| nous | recevions |
| vous | receviez |
| ils/elles | reçoivent |

present participle **recevant**

past participle **reçu**

imperative **reçois, recevons, recevez**

Verbs which follow the same pattern as **recevoir** include **apercevoir** *to catch sight of* and **décevoir** *to disappoint*.

## 38 **résoudre** *to solve*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je** | **résous** | **résoudrai** | **résoudrais** |
| **tu** | **résous** | **résoudras** | **résoudrais** |
| **il/elle** | **résout** | **résoudra** | **résoudrait** |
| **nous** | **résolvons** | **résoudrons** | **résoudrions** |
| **vous** | **résolvez** | **résoudrez** | **résoudriez** |
| **ils/elles** | **résolvent** | **résoudront** | **résoudraient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je/j'** | **résolvais** | **résolus** | **ai résolu** |
| **tu** | **résolvais** | **résolus** | **as résolu** |
| **il/elle** | **résolvait** | **résolut** | **a résolu** |
| **nous** | **résolvions** | **résolûmes** | **avons résolu** |
| **vous** | **résolviez** | **résolûtes** | **avez résolu** |
| **ils/elles** | **résolvaient** | **résolurent** | **ont résolu** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| **je** | **résolve** |
| **tu** | **résolves** |
| **il/elle** | **résolve** |
| **nous** | **résolvions** |
| **vous** | **résolviez** |
| **ils/elles** | **résolvent** |

present participle **résolvant**

past participle **résolu**

imperative **résous, résolvons, résolvez**

Verbs which follow the same pattern as **résoudre** include **dissoudre** *to dissolve*.

## 39 rire *to laugh*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je** | **ris** | **rirai** | **rirais** |
| **tu** | **ris** | **riras** | **rirais** |
| **il/elle** | **rit** | **rira** | **rirait** |
| **nous** | **rions** | **rirons** | **ririons** |
| **vous** | **riez** | **rirez** | **ririez** |
| **ils/elles** | **rient** | **riront** | **riraient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je/j'** | **riais** | **ris** | **ai ri** |
| **tu** | **riais** | **ris** | **as ri** |
| **il/elle** | **riait** | **rit** | **a ri** |
| **nous** | **riions** | **rîmes** | **avons ri** |
| **vous** | **riiez** | **rîtes** | **avez ri** |
| **ils/elles** | **riaient** | **rirent** | **ont ri** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| **je** | **rie** |
| **tu** | **ries** |
| **il/elle** | **rie** |
| **nous** | **riions** |
| **vous** | **riiez** |
| **ils/elles** | **rient** |

present participle **riant**

past participle **ri**

imperative **ris, rions, riez**

Verbs which follow the same pattern as **rire** include **sourire** *to smile*.

## 40 savoir *to know*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | sais | saurai | saurais |
| tu | sais | sauras | saurais |
| il/elle | sait | saura | saurait |
| nous | savons | saurons | saurions |
| vous | savez | saurez | sauriez |
| ils/elles | savent | sauront | sauraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | savais | sus | ai su |
| tu | savais | sus | as su |
| il/elle | savait | sut | a su |
| nous | savions | sûmes | avons su |
| vous | saviez | sûtes | avez su |
| ils/elles | savaient | surent | ont su |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | sache |
| tu | saches |
| il/elle | sache |
| nous | sachions |
| vous | sachiez |
| ils/elles | sachent |

present participle **sachant**

past participle **su**

imperative **sache, sachons, sachez**

## 41 servir *to serve*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | sers | servirai | servirais |
| tu | sers | serviras | servirais |
| il/elle | sert | servira | servirait |
| nous | servons | servirons | servirions |
| vous | servez | servirez | serviriez |
| ils/elles | servent | serviront | serviraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | servais | servis | ai servi |
| tu | servais | servis | as servi |
| il/elle | servait | servit | a servi |
| nous | servions | servîmes | avons servi |
| vous | serviez | servîtes | avez servi |
| ils/elles | servaient | servirent | ont servi |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | serve |
| tu | serves |
| il/elle | serve |
| nous | servions |
| vous | serviez |
| ils/elles | servent |

present participle **servant**

past participle **servi**

imperative **sers, servons, servez**

## 42 **suivre** *to follow*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je** | **suis** | **suivrai** | **suivrais** |
| **tu** | **suis** | **suivras** | **suivrais** |
| **il/elle** | **suit** | **suivra** | **suivrait** |
| **nous** | **suivons** | **suivrons** | **suivrions** |
| **vous** | **suivez** | **suivrez** | **suivriez** |
| **ils/elles** | **suivent** | **suivront** | **suivraient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je/j'** | **suivais** | **suivis** | **ai suivi** |
| **tu** | **suivais** | **suivis** | **as suivi** |
| **il/elle** | **suivait** | **suivit** | **a suivi** |
| **nous** | **suivions** | **suivîmes** | **avons suivi** |
| **vous** | **suiviez** | **suivîtes** | **avez suivi** |
| **ils/elles** | **suivaient** | **suivirent** | **ont suivi** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| **je** | **suive** |
| **tu** | **suives** |
| **il/elle** | **suive** |
| **nous** | **suivions** |
| **vous** | **suiviez** |
| **ils/elles** | **suivent** |

present participle **suivant**

past participle **suivi**

imperative **suis, suivons, suivez**

Verbs which follow the same pattern as **suivre** include **poursuivre** *to chase*.

## 43 **tenir** *to hold*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je** | **tiens** | **tiendrai** | **tiendrais** |
| **tu** | **tiens** | **tiendras** | **tiendrais** |
| **il/elle** | **tient** | **tiendra** | **tiendrait** |
| **nous** | **tenons** | **tiendrons** | **tiendrions** |
| **vous** | **tenez** | **tiendrez** | **tiendriez** |
| **ils/elles** | **tiennent** | **tiendront** | **tiendraient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je/j'** | **tenais** | **tins** | **ai tenu** |
| **tu** | **tenais** | **tins** | **as tenu** |
| **il/elle** | **tenait** | **tint** | **a tenu** |
| **nous** | **tenions** | **tînmes** | **avons tenu** |
| **vous** | **teniez** | **tîntes** | **avez tenu** |
| **ils/elles** | **tenaient** | **tinrent** | **ont tenu** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| **je** | **tienne** |
| **tu** | **tiennes** |
| **il/elle** | **tienne** |
| **nous** | **tenions** |
| **vous** | **teniez** |
| **ils/elles** | **tiennent** |

present participle **tenant**

past participle **tenu**

imperative **tiens, tenons, tenez**

Verbs which follow the same pattern include **appartenir** *to belong*, **contenir** *to contain*, **entretenir** *to maintain*, **maintenir** *to keep* and **obtenir** *to obtain*.

## 44 travailler *to work*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | travaille | travaillerai | travaillerais |
| tu | travailles | travailleras | travaillerais |
| il/elle | travaille | travaillera | travaillerait |
| nous | travaillons | travaillerons | travaillerions |
| vous | travaillez | travaillerez | travailleriez |
| ils/elles | travaillent | travailleront | travailleraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | travaillais | travaillai | ai travaillé |
| tu | travaillais | travaillas | as travaillé |
| il/elle | travaillait | travailla | a travaillé |
| nous | travaillions | travaillâmes | avons travaillé |
| vous | travailliez | travaillâtes | avez travaillé |
| ils/elles | travaillaient | travaillèrent | ont travaillé |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | travaille |
| tu | travailles |
| il/elle | travaille |
| nous | travaillions |
| vous | travailliez |
| ils/elles | travaillent |

present participle **travaillant**

past participle **travaillé**

imperative **travaille, travaillons, travaillez**

## 45 **valoir** *to be worth*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je** | **vaux** | **vaudrai** | **vaudrais** |
| **tu** | **vaux** | **vaudras** | **vaudrais** |
| **il/elle** | **vaut** | **vaudra** | **vaudrait** |
| **nous** | **valons** | **vaudrons** | **vaudrions** |
| **vous** | **valez** | **vaudrez** | **vaudriez** |
| **ils/elles** | **valent** | **vaudront** | **vaudraient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je/j'** | **valais** | **valus** | **ai valu** |
| **tu** | **valais** | **valus** | **as valu** |
| **il/elle** | **valait** | **valut** | **a valu** |
| **nous** | **valions** | **valûmes** | **avons valu** |
| **vous** | **valiez** | **valûtes** | **avez valu** |
| **ils/elles** | **valaient** | **valurent** | **ont valu** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| **je** | **vaille** |
| **tu** | **vailles** |
| **il/elle** | **vaille** |
| **nous** | **valions** |
| **vous** | **valiez** |
| **ils/elles** | **vaillent** |

present participle **valant**

past participle **valu**

imperative **vaux, valons, valez**

## 46 vendre *to sell*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| je | vends | vendrai | vendrais |
| tu | vends | vendras | vendrais |
| il/elle | vend | vendra | vendrait |
| nous | vendons | vendrons | vendrions |
| vous | vendez | vendrez | vendriez |
| ils/elles | vendent | vendront | vendraient |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| je/j' | vendais | vendis | ai vendu |
| tu | vendais | vendis | as vendu |
| il/elle | vendait | vendit | a vendu |
| nous | vendions | vendîmes | avons vendu |
| vous | vendiez | vendîtes | avez vendu |
| ils/elles | vendaient | vendirent | ont vendu |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| je | vende |
| tu | vendes |
| il/elle | vende |
| nous | vendions |
| vous | vendiez |
| ils/elles | vendent |

present participle **vendant**

past participle **vendu**

imperative **vends, vendons, vendez**

## 47 **venir** *to come*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je** | **viens** | **viendrai** | **viendrais** |
| **tu** | **viens** | **viendras** | **viendrais** |
| **il/elle** | **vient** | **viendra** | **viendrait** |
| **nous** | **venons** | **viendrons** | **viendrions** |
| **vous** | **venez** | **viendrez** | **viendriez** |
| **ils/elles** | **viennent** | **viendront** | **viendraient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je** | **venais** | **vins** | **suis venu(e)** |
| **tu** | **venais** | **vins** | **es venu(e)** |
| **il/elle** | **venait** | **vint** | **est venu(e)** |
| **nous** | **venions** | **vînmes** | **sommes venu(e)s** |
| **vous** | **veniez** | **vîntes** | **êtes venu(e)(s)** |
| **ils/elles** | **venaient** | **vinrent** | **sont venu(e)s** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| **je** | **vienne** |
| **tu** | **viennes** |
| **il/elle** | **vienne** |
| **nous** | **venions** |
| **vous** | **veniez** |
| **ils/elles** | **viennent** |

present participle **venant**

past participle **venu**

imperative **viens, venons, venez**

Verbs which follow the same pattern as **venir** include **convenir** *to suit*, **devenir** *to become* and **se souvenir (de)** *to remember*.

## 48 vivre *to live*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je** | **vis** | **vivrai** | **vivrais** |
| **tu** | **vis** | **vivras** | **vivrais** |
| **il/elle** | **vit** | **vivra** | **vivrait** |
| **nous** | **vivons** | **vivrons** | **vivrions** |
| **vous** | **vivez** | **vivrez** | **vivriez** |
| **ils/elles** | **vivent** | **vivront** | **vivraient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je/j'** | **vivais** | **vécus** | **ai vécu** |
| **tu** | **vivais** | **vécus** | **as vécu** |
| **il/elle** | **vivait** | **vécut** | **a vécu** |
| **nous** | **vivions** | **vécûmes** | **avons vécu** |
| **vous** | **viviez** | **vécûtes** | **avez vécu** |
| **ils/elles** | **vivaient** | **vécurent** | **ont vécu** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| **je** | **vive** |
| **tu** | **vives** |
| **il/elle** | **vive** |
| **nous** | **vivions** |
| **vous** | **viviez** |
| **ils/elles** | **vivent** |

present participle **vivant**

past participle **vécu**

imperative **vis, vivons, vivez**

Verbs which follow the same pattern as **vivre** include **survivre** *to survive*.

## 49 voir *to see*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je** | **vois** | **verrai** | **verrais** |
| **tu** | **vois** | **verras** | **verrais** |
| **il/elle** | **voit** | **verra** | **verrait** |
| **nous** | **voyons** | **verrons** | **verrions** |
| **vous** | **voyez** | **verrez** | **verriez** |
| **ils/elles** | **voient** | **verront** | **verraient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je/j'** | **voyais** | **vis** | **ai vu** |
| **tu** | **voyais** | **vis** | **as vu** |
| **il/elle** | **voyait** | **vit** | **a vu** |
| **nous** | **voyions** | **vîmes** | **avons vu** |
| **vous** | **voyiez** | **vîtes** | **avez vu** |
| **ils/elles** | **voyaient** | **virent** | **ont vu** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| **je** | **voie** |
| **tu** | **voies** |
| **il/elle** | **voie** |
| **nous** | **voyions** |
| **vous** | **voyiez** |
| **ils/elles** | **voient** |

present participle **voyant**

past participle **vu**

imperative **vois, voyons, voyez**

Verbs which follow the same pattern as **voir** include **prévoir** *to predict*.

## 50 vouloir *to want*

| | present | future | conditional |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je** | **veux** | **voudrai** | **voudrais** |
| **tu** | **veux** | **voudras** | **voudrais** |
| **il/elle** | **veut** | **voudra** | **voudrait** |
| **nous** | **voulons** | **voudrons** | **voudrions** |
| **vous** | **voulez** | **voudrez** | **voudriez** |
| **ils/elles** | **veulent** | **voudront** | **voudraient** |

| | imperfect | past historic | perfect |
|---|---|---|---|
| **je/j'** | **voulais** | **voulus** | **ai voulu** |
| **tu** | **voulais** | **voulus** | **as voulu** |
| **il/elle** | **voulait** | **voulut** | **a voulu** |
| **nous** | **voulions** | **voulûmes** | **avons voulu** |
| **vous** | **vouliez** | **voulûtes** | **avez voulu** |
| **ils/elles** | **voulaient** | **voulurent** | **ont voulu** |

| | present subjunctive |
|---|---|
| **je** | **veuille** |
| **tu** | **veuilles** |
| **il/elle** | **veuille** |
| **nous** | **voulions** |
| **vous** | **vouliez** |
| **ils/elles** | **veuillent** |

present participle **voulant**

past participle **voulu**

imperative **veuillez**

# Verb index

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| 2 | **aller** *to go* | 27 | **mettre** *to put* |
| 3 | **appeler** *to call* | 28 | **mourir** *to die* |
| 4 | **s'asseoir** *to sit down* | 29 | **naître** *to be born* |
| 5 | **avoir** *to have* | 30 | **ouvrir** *to open* |
| 6 | **battre** *to beat* | 31 | **partir** *to leave* |
| 7 | **boire** *to drink* | 32 | **peindre** *to paint* |
| 8 | **commencer** *to begin* | 33 | **plaire** *to please* |
| 9 | **conduire** *to drive* | 34 | **pleuvoir** *to rain* |
| 10 | **connaître** *to know* | 35 | **pouvoir** *to be able* |
| 11 | **courir** *to run* | 36 | **prendre** *to take* |
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| 13 | **croire** *to believe* | 38 | **résoudre** *to solve* |
| 14 | **devoir** *to have to* | 39 | **rire** *to laugh* |
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| 20 | **être** *to be* | 45 | **valoir** *to be worth* |
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| 22 | **falloir** *to be necessary* | 47 | **venir** *to come* |
| 23 | **finir** *to finish* | 48 | **vivre** *to live* |
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# Grammar terms

**Abstract nouns** are the words for intangible things like *liberty*, *silence*, *poverty*, *fear*, *happiness*. They're the opposite of concrete nouns such as *table*, *dog*, *water*.

**Adjectives** are words that describe or add information to nouns and pronouns: ***small*** *car, It was* ***superb***, ***French*** *wine*, ***first*** *class*, ***my*** *name*, ***Which*** *hotel?*, ***those*** *people*.

**Adverbs** add information to adjectives, verbs and other adverbs: ***very*** *small car*, *She speaks* ***clearly***, *She speaks* ***really*** *clearly*.

**Agreement** Unlike English, adjectives and articles in French change according to the noun/pronoun they relate to, needing to agree, i.e. match, in terms of gender (masculine/feminine) and number (singular/plural).

**Articles** are *the* (definite article), *a/an* (indefinite article) and *some* (partitive article). French has more than English.

An **aspirated h** is silent but behaves like a consonant. That means that **le** and **la** don't shorten to **l'** and **liaisons** don't occur before a word beginning with an aspirated h.

**Auxiliary verbs** are verbs that support the main verb: *We* ***have*** *eaten*, ***Has*** *she gone?* In English, but not French, *do/does* is used as an auxiliary verb in questions like *Do you understand?*

**Cardinal numbers** are *one*, *two*, *three*, *four*, etc.

**Comparatives** are used when making comparisons. English has two ways of comparing with adjectives: adding *-er* as in *bigger*, *cheaper*, and using the word *more* as in *more expensive*. Apart from a small number of irregular comparatives, French uses the second alternative, with **plus** *more* or **moins** *less*.

**Compound tenses** are two-word tenses. Most English tenses are compound e.g. the perfect *I have waited,* the pluperfect *I had waited*, the future *I will wait* and the conditional *I would wait*. Just under half of French tenses are compound tenses.

The **conditional** is a verb form used to say what would or could happen: *I would like to go, Would/Could you help me?* The **conditional perfect** translates *would have*: *I would have liked to go*.

**Conjunctions** are linking words like *and*, *but*, *while*, *because*.

**Consonants** and **vowels** make up the alphabet. The French vowels are **a**, **e**, **i**, **o**, **u**, **y**; the rest: **b**, **c**, **d**, **f**, etc. are the consonants.

**Continuous tenses** are used to say *I **am/was doing** something* in English. French doesn't have specific continuous tenses; the same verb form in French can mean *I do/did* and *I am/was doing*.

The **definite article** is the word *the*, which has several French translations.

**Demonstrative** words are used to point things out. *This, these, that, those* are demonstrative adjectives; *this one, that one, these (ones), those (ones)* are demonstrative pronouns.

A **direct object** is directly at the receiving end of a verb. In the sentence *We saw John, we* is the subject, *saw* is the verb and *John* is the direct object. Compare with **indirect object**.

**Direct object pronouns** are *me, us, you, him, her, it, them*.

**Feminine** See **gender**.

**Formal** is used to describe **vous**, the word for *you* when talking to someone you don't know well. The informal word for *you* is **tu**.

The **future perfect** translates *will have*: *She will have gone to work.*

The **future tense** of a verb translates the English *will*: *We will be there, I'll go later, She'll be at work.*

**Gender** Every French noun is either masculine or feminine, as are any articles and adjectives that relate to that noun.

A **gerund** in English is a noun ending in *-ing* that has been formed from a verb: *reading, driving, knowing*.

**Imperative** is the verb form used to give instructions or commands: ***Wait** for me, **Don't do** that, **Turn** the top clockwise.*

The **imperfect tense** of a verb is used to describe how things were and to talk about things that happened over a period of time or repeatedly: *She **was** furious, We **were watching** the match, We **used to go** there often.*

An **impersonal verb** is a verb form that doesn't relate to people or things and generally starts with *it*: *It's raining, It's possible*.

The **indefinite article** is *a/an* in English; **un** or **une** in French.

The **indicative mood** is used for factual statements: *He **goes** to school.* See also **mood**.

An **indirect object** is usually separated from its verb by *to* or *for*. In the sentence *We talked to John, we* is the subject, *talked* is the verb and *John* is the indirect object. Compare with **direct object**.

**Indirect object pronouns** usually have *to* or *for* in front of **direct object pronouns**, e.g. *to/for me, to/for them*. In French they're a single word.

**Infinitive** French verbs are listed in a dictionary in the infinitive form, ending in **-er**, **-ir**, or **-re**. The English equivalent uses *to*: **manger** *to eat*, **choisir** *to choose*, **comprendre** *to understand*, **avoir** *to have*.

**Informal** is used to describe **tu**, the word for *you* when talking to a good friend, a family member or a child. The formal word for *you* is **vous**.

**Interrogative** words are used in questions, e.g. *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *how*, *why*, *how much/many*.

**Intransitive verbs** need only a subject to make sense: *go*, *laugh*; unlike **transitive verbs** which need a subject and a direct object.

**Invariable** words don't change to agree with/match anything else.

**Irregular** nouns, verbs or adjectives don't behave in a predictable way like regular ones, and have to be learnt separately.

**Liaison** happens when a normally silent consonant at the end of a word is pronounced because it is followed by a word beginning with a vowel: **vous avez**.

**Masculine** See **gender**.

**Modal verbs** are verbs like *want*, *be able to*, *must*, which are followed by other verbs: *I* ***want*** *to stay here, I* ***can*** *swim, You* ***ought*** *to leave.*

The **mood** of a verb defines how it's used, e.g. the **indicative mood** is used for factual statements: *He* ***goes*** *to school*; while the **subjunctive mood** indicates that hard facts are not involved: *If he* ***were to go*** *to school …*

**Negatives** are words like *not, never, nothing, nobody*; and *not … ever, not … anybody, not … anything*.

**Nouns** are the words for living beings, things, places and concepts: *son*, *doctor*, *dog*, *table*, *house*, *Scotland*, *time*, *freedom*. See also **proper nouns**.

**Number** refers to the difference between singular (one) and plural (more than one).

**Numbers** See **cardinal numbers** and **ordinal numbers**.

The **object** of a sentence is at the receiving end of the verb. It can be direct: *They have* ***two children***; or indirect: *Anna talks* ***to the children***.

**Object pronoun**. See **direct object pronouns, indirect object pronouns**.

**Ordinal numbers** are *first*, *second*, *third*, *fourth*, etc.

**Parts of speech** are the grammatical building blocks of a sentence: *adjective*, *article*, *noun*, *pronoun*, *verb*, etc.

The **passive** describes something done ***to*** the subject rather than ***by*** it: *The meat is cooked in the oven, The room was booked by my friend.*

The **past historic tense** is only in formal writing. It translates the English simple past tense: *I went, I did* etc. Spoken French uses the perfect tense.

The **past participle** of a verb is used with *have* when talking about the past: *I have **finished**, He has **eaten**, They had **gone***. Some past participles can also be used as adjectives: *the **finished** product*.

The **perfect tense** of a verb is used in French to talk about the past; equivalent to the English *I worked* and *I have worked*.

The **person** of a verb indicates who or what is doing something:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| first person | = | the speaker: *I* (singular), *we* (plural) |
| second person | = | the person(s) being addressed: *you* |
| third person | = | who/what is being talked about: *he/she/it/they* |

**Personal pronouns** are words like *I, you, we, she, her, them*.

The **pluperfect tense** translates *had* done something: *She had worked hard all day*.

**Plural** means more than one.

**Possessive** relates to ownership: **possessive adjectives** are *my, our, your, his/her/its, their*; **possessive pronouns** are *mine, ours, yours, his/hers, theirs*.

**Prepositions** are words like *by, in, on, with, for, through, next to*. They relate a noun/pronoun to another part of the sentence by e.g. place, time, purpose: *It's **on** the back seat, We're here **until** Friday, I've got a letter **for** Tom.*

**Present participles** end in *-ing* in English. In French they end in **-ant**. They are used as adjectives or verbs.

The **present tense** of a verb is used to talk about things being done now: *I work, I'm working*.

**Pronouns** replace nouns to avoid the need to repeat them. They can be personal: *we, she, us*; demonstrative: *this one, those*; possessive: *mine, theirs*. They can also involve *one/ones*: *the big one, the red ones*.

**Proper nouns** are the names of specific people, places or organisations. They're written with a capital letter: *Sally, Cambridge, European Union*.

**Reflexive pronouns** are **me, te, se, nous, vous**, used as an integral part of **reflexive verbs** in French.

**Reflexive verbs** are made up of two words, the first of which is **se** in the infinitive form. There's no consistent English equivalent, although many reflexive verbs include *get* or *oneself* in the translation: **se marier** *to get married*, **s'amuser** *to enjoy oneself*.

**Regular** nouns, adjectives, verbs etc. behave in a predictable way, conforming to the pattern for that particular part of speech.

**Relative pronouns** are words like *which*, *who*, *that*, used to join together parts of a sentence without repeating the noun.

The **simple past tense** in English is, for example, *I worked*, *We ate*, *They spoke*. There's also a simple past tense in French, called the **past historic**, but it's never used when speaking – the **perfect tense** is used instead.

**Simple tenses** are one-word tenses like *I play*, *I played*. French has slightly more simple tenses than English.

**Singular** means one.

The **stem** of a French verb is what's left when you remove the **-er**, **-ir**, or **-re** ending of the infinitive. You can then add other endings to this stem.

**Stressed pronouns** are the pronouns used in French after prepositions: **moi**, **toi**, **lui**, **elle**, **nous**, **vous**, **eux**, **elles**.

The **subject** of a sentence is whoever or whatever is carrying out the verb: ***They*** *have two children*, ***Anna*** *reads the paper*, ***This house*** *cost a lot of money*, ***Peace*** *is possible*.

**Subject pronouns** are *I, we, you, he, she, it, they*.

**Subjunctive** is a form of a verb that's more widely used in French than English. It equates to the English *may* or *were*: ***May*** *all your dreams come true, if I* ***were*** *rich*, but it's also used in a range of well-defined grammatical circumstances. See also **mood**.

**Superlative** is the *most/least ...* when comparing several things. In English you can add *-est* to many adjectives: *biggest*, *cheapest*, or you can use *most*: *most expensive*. There's no French equivalent of *-est*; it uses **le/la/les plus**.

A **syllable** is a unit that contains a vowel and consists of a single sound: *can* has one syllable, *can-ter* has two, while *Can-ter-bu-ry* has four.

The **tense** of a verb indicates when something is done:

| | |
|---|---|
| in the past | perfect tense: *I (have) worked* |
| | imperfect tense: *I was working*, *I used to work* |
| now | present tense: *I work, I'm working* |
| in the future | future tense: *I will work* |

**Transitive verbs** need both a **subject** and a **direct object**: *use, give, throw*, unlike **intransitive verbs** which need only a subject: *sleep*, *sit*, *sneeze*. Some verbs can be used both transitively and intransitively: *The pilot flew the plane* (transitive), *I flew at eight o'clock this morning* (intransitive).

**Verbs** are words like *to go*, *to sleep*, *to eat*, *to like*, *to have*, *to be*, *to think;* they refer to doing and being.

**Vowels** and **consonants** make up the alphabet. In French, vowels are the sounds made by the letters **a**, **e**, **i**, **o**, **u**, **y**; the rest **b**, **c**, **d**, etc are consonants.

# Answers

## Getting started Page 9

1 *a* Sofia N; glossy ADJ; magazine N; organises V; interviews N; hires V; professional ADJ; models N; photographers N; travels V; world N; boyfriend N; well-known ADJ; actor N; *b* my ADJ; father N; comes V; Toulouse N; lives V; Paris N; works V; central ADJ; office N; large ADJ; company N; *c* prepared V; fantastic ADJ; meal N; ate V; grilled ADJ; fish N; fresh ADJ; asparagus N; new ADJ; potatoes N; drank V; superb ADJ; French ADJ; white ADJ; wine N; dessert N; incredible ADJ

2 *a* very ADV; reasonable ADJ; rather ADV; dilapidated ADJ; really ADV; small ADJ; overgrown ADJ; *b* superbly ADV; terribly ADV; uneven ADJ; deliberately ADV; unfair ADJ

## Checkpoint 1 Page 24

1 les oignons; les hindous; les Européens
2 comme
3 François; Louis; Nicolas; Thérèse
4 doo-bluh vay, doo-bluh vay, doo-bluh vay or trois doo-bluh vay
5 arobase
6 L'adresse de l'Académie française est 23, quai de Conti, 75006 Paris
7 It rises
8 y
9 ravi

## Checkpoint 2 Page 32

1 *a* zéro; *b* virgule
2 smaller
3 huit; dix-huit; vingt-huit; soixante-dix-huit; quatre-vingt-huit
4 2.400.000 or 2 400 000
5 *a* It's five o'clock; *b* at seven o'clock in the evening; *c* after midnight; *d* yesterday evening at seven o'clock; *e* at half past eight; *f* 1st August; *g* about one o'clock; *h* next Friday; *i* at 11 o'clock on the dot; *j* until ten o'clock
6 *a* il est onze heures; *b* à neuf heures; *c* à midi; *d* après dix-huit heures; *e* à neuf heures pile; *f* demain à dix heures; *g* hier à dix heures; *h* dimanche à seize heures; *i* à sept heures tous les jours; *j* avant trois heures de l'après-midi
7 *a* en; *b* dans; *c* pendant
8 about two weeks/about a fortnight
9 le premier janvier; le vingt-cinq décembre; le trente et un décembre
10 16.44
11 soixante-dix
12 en mille/mil sept cent quatre-vingt-neuf; or en dix-sept cent quatre-vingt-neuf
13 printemps
14 75%

## Checkpoint 3 Page 42

1 gâteau m; chou-fleur m; personne f; toilette f; médecin m; pare-brise m; collègue m/f; victime f; chaussure f; cousine f; silence m; enfant m/f
2 porcs; neveux; cadeaux; chats; souris; cafés; choux; monuments; personnes; yeux; lieux; fonctionnaires; prix; pneus; enfants; messieurs; chevaux; hôpitaux; grenouilles; pays

3 feminine
4 book and pound
5 several female musicians
6 personne; vedette; victime or idole
7 *a* biologie; *b* inflation; *c* probabilité; *d* criminologiste; *e* obstacle; *f* absence; *g* journalisme
8 mother-in-law and stepmother
9 Have a good day
10 storm (tempest)
11 traductrice

## Checkpoint 4 Page 50

1 un chef; une infirmière; un/une secrétaire; une vedette; une université; une solution; une personne; un gâteau; une eau minérale; une vache; un musée; une ville; un village; un lycée; une serveuse
2 le chef; l'infirmière; le/la secrétaire; la vedette; l'université; la solution; la personne; le gâteau; l'eau minérale; la vache; le musée; la ville; le village; le lycée; la serveuse
3 *a* à la gare; *b* à l'hôtel de ville; *c* aux Halles; *d* au Louvre; *e* de l'eau minérale; *f* des pommes; *g* du Brie; *h* de la bière
4 *a* Vous êtes français?; *b* Vous êtes étudiant?; *c* Parlez-vous anglais? (or Vous parlez anglais?); *d* Vous aimez la cuisine chinoise?

## Checkpoint 5 Page 60

1 *a* le premier ministre: prime minister; *b* la Maison Blanche: White House; *c* un centre sportif: sports centre; *d* la musique populaire: pop music; *e* une carte verte: green card; *f* les grandes villes françaises: big French towns; *g* Les Nations Unies: United Nations; *h* une coïncidence heureuse: happy coincidence; *i* deuxième classe: second class; *j* les femmes fatales; *k* l'art moderne: modern art; *l* la communauté locale: local community
2 *a* simple; *b* long; *c* dernier; *d* haut; *e* faux; *f* important; *g* public; *h* clair
3 *a* accessible; *b* brutal; *c* ethnique; *d* stagnant; *e* biologique; *f* copieux; *g* radical; *h* portable; *i* susceptible; *j* prestigieux
4 *a* after; une attraction fatale; *b* before; un cher collègue or une chère collègue; *c* before; la seule personne; *d* after; les films français
5 *a* le blanc; les grandes; le vieux; la verte fonçé; *b* quelque chose d'impossible; quelque chose de différent; rien de nouveau; rien de spécial

## Checkpoint 6 Page 68

1 *a* absolu; *b* simple; *c* constant; *d* récent; *e* vrai; *f* précis; *g* lent; *h* courant; *i* complet; *j* effectif; *k* brillant; *l* doux
2 *a* autrement; *b* sérieusement; *c* scientifiquement; *d* généralement; *e* fréquemment; *f* malheureusement; *g* actuellement; *h* évidemment; *i* franchement; *j* agressivement; *k* poliment; *l* énormément
3 *a* exactement/précisément; *b* mieux; *c* vite; *d* mal; *e* souvent/fréquemment; *f* fort
4 *a* plus dur; *b* meilleures, moins chères; *c* le plus intéressant; *d* que; *e* le plus lent; *f* pire/plus

mauvais; *g* mieux; *h* le plus grand ... du monde; *i* aussi ... que

## Checkpoint 7 Page 73

**1** *a* cette; *b* ces; *c* cet; *d* cette; *e* ce; *f* cet; *g* cette; *h* ces; *i* cet; *j* cette; *k* ces; *l* cet

**2** *a* celle; *b* ceux; *c* celui; *d* celles; *e* celui; *f* celui; *g* celles

## Checkpoint 8 Page 76

**1** *a* son; *b* leur; *c* vos; *d* notre; *e* ton; *f* votre; *g* leurs; *h* mon; *i* nos; *j* mes

**2** *a* le mien; *b* les siennes; *c* la sienne; *d* les nôtres; *e* les tiens; *f* le vôtre; *g* le sien; *h* le leur

## Checkpoint 9 Page 83

**1** y; **2** y ; **3** en; **4** y; **5** en; **6** en; **7** en; **8** y; **9** y; **10** en

## Checkpoint 10 Page 88

**1** Bonjour, c'est moi.

**2** *a* tu; *b* vous; *c* vous; *d* vous

**3** *a* – *vi*; *b* – *v*; *c* – *iv*; *d* – *ii*; *e* – *i*

**4** *a* le; *b* me; *c* leur; *d* l'; *e* nous; *f* lui; *g* les; *h* nous

**5** Vous voulez l'écouter? Il faut les acheter.

**6** *a* avec elles; *b* pour moi; *c* sans eux; *d* sauf toi; *e* après nous; *f* chez lui

**7** They know each other. (speaking about women)

**8** Moi, je l'ai fait./Je l'ai fait, moi.

**9** *c*

**10** Il nous l'a donné.

## Checkpoint 11 Page 96

**1** *a* dis donc!; *b* Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez?; *c* Bof!; *d* à mon avis; *e* Je suis d'accord; de toute façon – anyway – is left over

**2** *a* lequel; *b* laquelle; *c* lequel; *d* lesquelles; *e* lesquels

**3** où

**4** *a* qui; *b* que; *c* qui; *d* dont; *e* dont; *f* que

**5** d'autre part

**6** plutôt – the others give a reason for something

## Checkpoint 12 Page 108

**1** *a* en; *b* pour; *c* par; *d* aux; *e* depuis; *f* à, du; *g* dans; *h* avec

**2** *a* a house near the sea; *b* my uncle's house; *c* a house with white walls; *d* a house in the shade; *e* a house costing two million euros; *f* a house designed by (or owned by) Sir Christopher Wren; *g* a wooden house; *h* a house without a garage; *i* a three-storey house; *j* a house under the bridge; *k* the house opposite; *l* the house at the end of the road

**3** *a* la sœur de Michelle; *b* un numéro de téléphone; *c* le jus de tomate; *d* une bouteille de vin; *e* à mardi; *f* c'est à moi; *g* l'article de demain; *h* quelque chose de différent

**4** un verre à champagne

**5** sur la television means on top of the television and à la television means (showing) on television, i.e. broadcast.

**6** en face du parking

**7** un sandwich au fromage; un roman d'amour; en été; en nylon

## Checkpoint 13 Page 120

**1** arrival, deep

**2** dream

**3** -er, -ir, -re; the largest group is -er

**4** tense

**5** je/I; ils, elles/they

**6** past historic

**7** Il a décidé de ne pas rester ici.

**8** pull

**9** irregular verb; reflexive verb

**10** to kiss

11 dominer; illustrer; isoler; simuler; commercialiser; maximiser
12 disinfect; irrigate; subjugate; disarm; disintegrate; relegate

## Checkpoint 14 Page 132

1 *a* Il n'est pas étudiant; *b* Ce n'était pas bien; *c* Je ne le connais pas; *d* On n'y va pas souvent; *e* Nous ne nous sommes pas promenés sur la plage; *f* Je n'ai pas bu de vin.
2 *a* plus; *b* guère; *c* que; *d* aucune
3 Je ne joue ni au tennis ni au golf.
4 ne ... nulle part
5 *a* Personne ne m'a téléphoné; *b* Elle ne visite jamais personne; *c* Je n'ai vu aucun de mes amis.
6 est-ce que
7 qui
8 *a – ii; b – i; c – iii*
9 n'est-ce pas for both
10 *a* quelle; *b* quelles; *c* lequel; *d* laquelle

## Checkpoint 15 Page 139

1 dites; arrivent; finissent; nageons; offre; espèrent; pars; menaçons; nettoie; craignez
2 *a* Nous allons/On va à Paris demain; *b* Il est en train de parler; *c* Elle vient d'être ici; *d* Je travaille ici depuis cinq ans.
3 offrir

## Checkpoint 16 Page 152

1 from left to right: conditional, je or tu → vouloir, to want; imperfect, il/elle → finir, to finish; future, nous → venir, to come; past historic, ils/elles → avoir, to have; present, je → aller, to go; future, il/elle → envoyer, to send; conditional, je or tu → pouvoir, to be able; imperfect, ils/elles → être, to be; past historic, il/elle → regarder, to look at; conditional, vous → préférer, to prefer; present, vous → dire, to say; future, ils/elles → recevoir, to receive; imperfect, nous → faire, to do; future, il/elle → mourir, to die; past historic, il/elle → être, to be; conditional, je or tu → devoir, to have to; present, ils/elles → tenir, to hold; future, nous → être, to be; present, je or tu → partir, to leave; future, vous → savoir, to know; imperfect, il/elle → plaire, to please
2 from left to right: j'arriverai; il/elle choisissait; tu demanderais; nous payons; ils/elles voulaient; tu comprendras; il/elle sort; je nettoierai; il/elle pensait; vous écririez; tu offres; ils/elles attendent; je commençais; ils/elles continueront
3 Quand j'avais cinq ans nous habitions à Besançon.
Moi, je le ferais avec plaisir mais je n'ai pas de temps.
Je vous téléphonerai quand elle arrivera.
Si tu es libre demain nous pourrons aller au cinéma.

## Checkpoint 17 Page 162

1 choisi; envoyé; fait; venu; regardé; été; connu; entendu; entré; parti; payé; eu; attendu; né; mis; dit; pensé; bu; mort; descendu; pu; plu; ouvert; réussi
2 *a* a; *b* ai; *c* sommes; *d* es; *e* a; *f* êtes; *g* ont; *h* sont
3 *a* none required; *b* vue; *c* allés; *d* amusée; *e* rencontrés
4 *a* venais; *b* avez vu; *c* faisait; *d* est allés; *e* avait; *f* habitait; *g* a commencé; *h* lisait

## Checkpoint 18 Page 166

1 *a* Il avait compris; *b* J'aurai fini mon travail; *c* Nous y serions allés; *d* Qu'est-ce qu'elle avait fait?; *e* Ils se seraient promenés dans le parc; *f* Tu auras commencé avant cinq heures?; *g* J'aurais dû parler avec lui; *h* Si vous aviez su.

2 La maison sera vendue.
Les vedettes étaient habillées par Jean Paul Gaultier.
Le chien avait été emmené chez le vétérinaire.
Mes cousins ont été invités.
Les bâtiments anciens ont été renovés.

3 cuire

4 *a* Après être sortie de la voiture, elle a vu son amie; *b* Après avoir vu son amie, elle a traversé la rue; *c* Après s'être levé, il a bu une tasse de café; *d* Après avoir bu son café, il est sorti; *e* Après être arrivés à l'aéroport, ils ont changé de l'argent.

## Checkpoint 19 Page 173

1 "Alors, ne prenez pas la première rue à gauche, mais continuez tout droit jusqu'aux feux. Tournez à gauche, traversez la place, puis prenez la deuxième rue à droite. Ne vous inquiétez pas – ce n'est pas loin".

2 A

3 vous; ne prends pas; continue; tourne; traverse; prends; ne t'inquiète pas.

4 *a* ne lui en donne pas; *b* ne te lève pas; *c* envoyez-les-leur

5 *a* venant; *b* ayant; *c* lisant; *d* en voyant; *e* en sortant; *f* en mangeant

## Checkpoint 20 Page 182

1 *a* parte; *b* soyons; *c* choisisse; *d* veniez; *e* boivent; *f* dises; *g* prenions; *h* veuille; *i* aille; *j* puissiez; *k* amène; *l* ait

2 *a* après que; *b* espérer que

3 *a* viennes; *b* aies; *c* soit; *d* veuille; *e* fasse

4 *a* Je ne pense pas qu'il ait fini; *b* Je ne crois pas qu'elle sache la réponse; *c* Je ne pense pas que tu sois trop timide.

5 *a* Je veux que tu finisses maintenant; *b* Je veux que vous fassiez attention; *c* Je veux que nous y allions; *d* Je veux que vous m'écoutiez; *e* Je veux que tu dises la vérité.

## Checkpoint 21 Page 194

1 *a* fais; *b* faites; *c* avez; *d* sont; *e* être; *f* a; *g* ai; *h* fera; *i* fait; *j* ont

2 *a* Il faut que tu partes; *b* Il faut que nous lui téléphonions; *c* Il faut que je fasse les devoirs; *d* Il faut que vous vous leviez tôt.

3 *a* Je voudrais; *b* Vous devriez; *c* Elles veulent; *d* J'aurais dû; *e* on peut; *f* Je veux; *g* Tu sais; *h* Nous aurions pu; *i* Tu peux; *j* Elle doit

4 faire la grasse matinée

## Checkpoint 22 Page 202

1 *a* de; *b* à; *c* d'; *d* d'; *e* à; *f* d'; *g* de; *h* de

2 *a* au; *b* du; *c* à la; *d* du; *e* du; *f* à l'; *g* des; *h* à la

3 *a* Ils attendent le train; *b* J'aime jouer au tennis; *c* Elle a oublié de payer; *d* Nous sommes sur le point de partir; *e* Elle cherche son sac; *f* Tu as besoin d'argent?; *g* J'ai demandé cent euros; *h* Nous espérons revenir l'année prochaine.

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